

A Complete Guide to the Common Assessment Standard

Find out what the Common Assessment Standard is, why so many organisations are adopting it into their prequalification requirements and how you can use this level of accreditation to expand your business.



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CHAS is the leading provider of risk prevention, compliance and supply chain management services for clients and contractors. Our aims are simple:

- To standardise and simplify health and safety assessment for contractors
- To support organisations in efficiently managing their supply chains
- To deliver a full suite of supply chain management tools.



An Introduction to the Common Assessment Standard

Developed in 2019 by Build UK and the Civil Engineering Contractors Association, the Common Assessment Standard has quickly become the industry standard for risk management accreditation in construction and related sectors.

For contractors, it offers a way to demonstrate compliance and prequalify for supply chain opportunities without needing multiple certifications from several different assessment bodies. The Common Assessment Standard is recognised nationwide. Once you've achieved accreditation with one assessment body, you can share your data with the other recognised assessment bodies.

For clients, the Common Assessment Standard offers a reliable way to ensure the competence and compliance of contractors. By working with contractors that hold this level of accreditation, you can ensure the safety, sustainability and efficiency of your supply chain operations. You can also streamline your procurement process by adopting the Common Assessment Standard into your prequalification system.

If you're still getting to grips with the Common Assessment Standard and how it can benefit your business, you'll find everything you need to know in this guide.

What Is the Common Assessment Standard?

The Common Assessment Standard is a risk management accreditation you can achieve by completing a set of general prequalification questions. The question set builds on the PAS91 prequalification questionnaire, covering 13 key areas of risk management.

It's the most comprehensive level of accreditation, requiring you to demonstrate your competence and compliance in a number of different areas, from health and safety to financial performance, information security, environmental protection and modern slavery. You'll need to answer the questions relevant to your business and include supporting documentation to evidence your answers. You'll also need to update your answers to the questions set annually to maintain accreditation.

The Common Assessment Standard is achievable for businesses of all sizes. Your answers to each question and the supporting documentation you provide are proportionate to the size of your business.



Completing the Assessment:

What to Expect

The Common Assessment Standard accreditation is achievable for businesses of all sizes, but it helps to know what to expect from the assessment and how you can prepare.

The question set is designed to be simple to answer, with clear guidance for every question.

The 13 Areas of Risk Management

The question set covers the following 13 areas of risk management; it includes and builds on the topics covered in the PAS91 questionnaire:

Identity - You'll need to provide general information about your company's name, contact details, registration, company size and address to verify that you're legally operating within the UK.

Financial - The assessment will check you've taken the necessary steps to reduce financial risks, so you will need to answer questions about your company's financial information and provide any required supporting documentation.

Insurance - You must provide details of the insurances you are required to have to operate your business.

Corporate and Professional Standing - The Common Assessment Standard assesses your corporate and professional standing with questions relating to criminal activity, corruption, terrorism and human trafficking.

Health and Safety - A huge amount of importance rests on health and safety during the Common Assessment Standard. You will need to demonstrate your company has taken steps to protect workers, site visitors and the public from harm.

Environmental - The Common Assessment Standard includes a set of environmental questions that ask about whether your company has taken the necessary steps to reduce the environmental impact of projects and meet environmental management standards.

Quality - Quality assurance can prevent problems from arising and reduce the risks involved in projects, so the Common Assessment Standard will require confirmation that your company meets quality management standards.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) - The assessment will ask you to confirm your company promotes equality and diversity in the workplace and that all people are treated fairly.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) - You'll be asked about your company's impact on society, so you will need to provide some details regarding your CSR policy.

Information Security - You will need to demonstrate your company is protecting personal data in line with the GDPR.

Information Management - Questions about Information Management explore how your company develops, manages and controls design information, if applicable.

Anti-Bribery and Corruption - The Common Assessment Standard will check you have implemented procedures to prevent persons within or associated with your organisation from receiving bribes or bribing others.

Modern Slavery - You will need to confirm your organisation has taken steps to assess and manage modern slavery and human trafficking risks.

Recognised Assessment Bodies and Data Sharing

You can complete the Common Assessment Standard accreditation with one of the four recognised assessment bodies – CHAS, Constructionline, Achilles or CQMS.

All four recognised assessment bodies have entered into a data-sharing agreement, which means your accreditation will be visible to clients across all schemes, regardless of which organisation you completed your assessment with.

For example, if you complete the Common Assessment Standard through CHAS and you have a client that is a Constructionline member, they'll be able to find your accreditation information through Constructionline.

So when choosing which assessment body to complete the assessment with, consider which organisation offers the most cost-effective accreditation package with the best member benefits, support and convenience.

At CHAS, we have an award-winning team that is here to support you throughout your assessment and we offer a number of member benefits that can help you effectively mitigate risks and pass the Common Assessment Standard. We were also the first recognised assessment body to offer the Common Assessment Standard.



What Supporting Documents Will You Need?

Many of the questions in the Common Assessment Standard require you to provide supporting documents alongside your answers.

The documents you'll need will depend on your business, but they're likely to include your:

- Risk management policies
- Anti-slavery and human trafficking statement
- Corporate social responsibility policy
- Environmental management policy
- Any insurance certificates you hold, such as Contractors All Risk, Employer's Liability, Product Liability, Professional Indemnity and Public Liability insurance certificates
- ISO certifications, such as ISO 27001, 14001, or 9001 (or equivalents)
- Trade-specific licences/accreditations

The Common Assessment Standard is designed to minimise duplication, so if you hold a valid SSIP certificate, you won't have to complete questions that you answered previously.

Any supporting documentation and certificates you provide will need to be valid and up-to-date. Your risk management policies should have been recently reviewed to ensure they remain effective and, if necessary, revised to ensure that they are relevant to your workplace.



Choosing Between a Desktop and On-Site Assessment

There are two ways to complete the Common Assessment Standard: a desktop or a site-based assessment.

You can choose to complete either type of assessment. The primary difference is that the site-based assessment will involve your assessor visiting your business premises. The most appropriate assessment for your business will depend on the size of your business, your type of trade and your clients' requirements.

How to Complete the CHAS Common Assessment Standard

You can complete your assessment in the MyCHAS member portal. The questions set will be presented in an easy-to-read format; you'll just need to add your answers and upload any supporting documentation.

If you're completing the desktop assessment, you simply need to submit your answers and one of our assessors will review your assessment remotely.

If you opted for the site-based assessment, you'll need to arrange for a CHAS assessor to visit your business premises to check the validity and effectiveness of your risk management policies and information you've provided.

Whichever assessment you complete, you'll receive a decision within 10 working days about whether or not you've passed. When you've passed, you'll receive a CHAS Common Assessment Standard certificate and your accreditation data will be added to the CHAS database so that you can share the details with the other recognised assessment bodies. Your CHAS business profile will also be updated with your new accreditation and displayed to thousands of CHAS clients.

The Common Assessment Standard involves a comprehensive question-set that can sound daunting, but it's designed to be as straightforward as possible. If your submission needs more detail or evidence, our experienced and helpful assessors will be in contact with details of what is required.



How to Make the Most of the Common Assessment Standard

The Common Assessment Standard can have significant benefits for your business and below are some recommended actions to take to make the most of this level of accreditation:

Take Advantage of CHAS Member Benefits

When you complete the Common Assessment Standard with CHAS, you'll also have access* to a range of valuable member benefits including:

- Free CHAS Legal Helpline
- 20% discount with Speedy Hire
- Discounted risk management training courses and CHAS RAMS
- Free e-learning resources on H&S, environmental issues, HR issues
- 10% off almost everything in B&Q with free of charge TradePoint cards
- Discounted membership to Checkatrade.com
- 10% exclusive discount on Norm's cyber security products
- Discounted fuel schemes and business insurance

Advertise Your Accreditation Status

You should actively promote your Common Assessment Standard accreditation status. You can display your certificate in your workplace, highlight your accreditation on your website and other communications and use your certification to support investor pitches.

Apply for Exclusive Supply Chain Opportunities

With the Common Assessment Standard certification, you'll meet the prequalification requirements of more clients, providing opportunities to grow your business.

For example, organisations like Multiplex, Skanska, Kier and Costain already require you to have this level of accreditation. Contractors working on public sector projects, such as HS2, also need to be certified against the Common Assessment Standard. And often, tenders with strict prequalification requirements will be big-ticket and/or long-term opportunities that can help your business grow.

Review Your Risk Management

The Common Assessment Standard involves an annual audit that encourages you to regularly

review your risk management policies and procedures. We suggest using the annual audit to make sure your risk management strategy is as effective as it can be - not just to make sure you're complying with important legislation.

Adopt the Standard in Your Prequalification System

If you work with contractors, why not adopt the Common Assessment Standard into your procurement process to form the basis of your prequalification system?

By requiring your supply chain partners to hold this level of accreditation, you can ensure risk management best practices are upheld across your supply chain. You can work exclusively with contractors with the skills, knowledge and experience needed to help you maintain compliance and ensure operations are completed safely and sustainably

You can sign up for free CHAS Client membership now to gain access to over 32,000 accredited contractors. And with our contractor matching service, you can find the best supply chain partners for your projects.

*t&cs apply



The Common Assessment Standard Checklist

Follow these simple steps ahead of completing the Common Assessment Standard:

Have you chosen a recognised assessment body?

Remember, once you're accredited with one assessment body, all clients and other assessment schemes will recognise your accreditation. So when choosing an assessment scheme, consider the best value for money, benefits and customer support included in your accreditation package.

Have you signed up for the right accreditation package?

Once you've chosen an assessment body, you need to sign up for the accreditation package that gives you access to the Common Assessment Standard. At CHAS, this is the **CHAS Elite** package.

Do you want desktop or site-based assessment?

You may choose to complete the desktop assessment for convenience and to gain accreditation quickly. However, the full site-based assessment can help you meet the prequalification requirements for more supply chain opportunities. Some organisations may require you to hold site-based certification if you're going to be completing high-risk tasks.

Do you have your company information to hand?

The first section of the Common Assessment Standard will ask you for details about your company, such as your company registration number, your unique tax reference and your VAT registration number.

Do you have up-to-date risk management policies and procedures?

Before starting the assessment, make sure your risk management policies have been reviewed and, if necessary, revised recently. If your workplace or workforce has changed or its been some time since you last drafted your policies, these will need to be reviewed and updated to ensure they are relevant.

Have you checked the effectiveness of your risk management policies lately?

Make sure your policies are helping you effectively mitigate risks and minimise incidents. Check your accident logs for any patterns and incidents that could have been avoided to get an idea of whether or not your policies and procedures are effective.

Communicate your risk management policies to staff and contractors

Ensuring that your staff and contractors are aware of your risk management policies and procedures means you can maintain compliance across your operations and avoid incidents that could prevent you from becoming accredited.

Once you have all of the information you need and have prepared your supporting documents, simply complete the Common Assessment Standard. If you've chosen CHAS, simply apply online through the MyCHAS portal.

Find Out More

If you would like to find out more about how CHAS accreditation can help grow your business, please contact us on 0345 521 9111 or visit www.chas.co.uk

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