



DCC Process Guide

Introduction

This guide provides a clear and straightforward overview of the DCC certification process for both Applicants and Assessors. It outlines the key steps, from identifying the need for certification to achieving certification and beyond. The process is designed to be professional yet accessible, ensuring all parties understand their roles and responsibilities.

DCC Certification Process Guide (Level 0)

Step 1: Assessment Preparation

Key Steps

1. **Define the Scope:** The Applicant uses the IASME Scoping Guide to determine the boundaries of their certification.
 - For **simple companies**, follow the Scoping Guide.
 - For **complex companies**, consult a Certification Body for additional support.
2. **Select a Certification Body:** The Applicant chooses a Certification Body to conduct their assessment. This may involve:
 - Selecting their regular Certification Body or exploring other options.
 - Engaging in a quoting process, if required.
 - The Applicant providing key details to the Certification Body, such as:
 - Organisation size
 - The critical environment being certified (Scope)
 - Number of sites
 - Organisational complexity
 - Security clearance requirements
 - Level of preparedness

The selected Certification Body will review the Applicants scope proposed for certification to ensure it is appropriate.

Ready or Not

If it becomes apparent during these discussions that the Applicant is not fully prepared for the assessment, they may opt to engage the Certification Body to

provide implementation support instead. In this case, the process will be end. The Applicant can return for certification at a later date.

If the Applicant is ready to move forward, the Certification Body and Applicant can finalise their agreement, and the onboarding process will begin to initiate the scheme.

Step 2: Onboarding

The Certification Body will onboard the Applicant to the IASME portal by:

- Inputting the Applicant organisation's details into the system.
- Selecting the assessment level.

Hosting and Access

Concurrent activities outside the scheme are expected to include:

- The Applicant and Assessor arranging file sharing with the Applicant hosting all submission files and granting access to their Certification Body.
- Arrange any necessary clearances for reviews of sensitive data.

Step 3: Submission Preparation

Readiness Check

Once onboarded, the Certification Body will confirm:

- That the Applicant has the latest guidance documents.
- That the Applicant has read the guidance materials.
- That the Applicant understands the scheme's requirements (e.g., answers, evidence, data storage, and any critical requirements that, if missing, could result in an automatic failure).

If the Applicant is not ready, they can end the process and focus on implementation, either with the same Certification Body or another implementer.

Preparing the Portal Submission

The Applicant begins preparing their DCC submission, either independently or with support from a Certification Body or third party.

The portal submission is only used at level 0. The Level 0 path does not allow the Applicant to aim for a higher certification level. For that option, they must follow the Level 1-3 process.

Once all questions have been answered, with explanations provided, the Applicant submits their assessment for marking.

Step 4: Assessment

Scoring

The Certification Body reviews the submission and marks each question as:

- Compliant
- Non-compliant
- More information needed (in which case, the Applicant provides updates and resubmits)

Once all questions are marked as either compliant or non-compliant, the Certification Body submits the results which moves the process to step 5, certification.

Step 5: Certification

If the Applicant passes, a certificate is automatically issued through the BlockMark system.

DCC Certification Process Guide (Levels 1-3)

Portal Gates

When actions are needed on the portal to move forward, the exact instructions will be shown in boxes like this one.

Step 1: Assessment Preparation

The assessment preparation for levels 1 to 3 is the same as level 0

Step 2: Onboarding

Certification Body Responsibilities

The Certification Body will onboard the Applicant to the IASME portal by:

- Inputting the Applicant organisation's details into the system.
- Selecting the assessment level.
- Completing a conflict-of-interest declaration.
- Providing schedule estimates for assessment dates

Portal Gate 1

1) Add new Applicant - The Certification Body Assessor inputs the customer's details into the portal, including the company name, size, address, and other relevant information.

2) Applicant Contributors - The Certification Body Assessor enters the applicant's email addresses into the portal. Multiple email addresses can be added. This provides login details to the applicant in an email)

3) Add Scope / Assessment (Scopes) - The Certification Body Assessor selects the assessments level, or in the case of a hybrid assessment, levels. Once the selection is finalised, the system creates an assessment. This action is billable. This is also emailed to the applicant.

4) Portal Gate 1 - The Certification Body Assessor confirms whether a conflict of interest statement has been recorded using a tick boxes - failure to do so prevents progress to stage 2.

5) Portal Gate 1 - The Certification Body Assessor confirms whether there is a conflict of interest or not using a tick boxes.

6) The Applicant logs in and is required to accept the terms and conditions, confirm the conflict of interest and completes their questions.

7) Portal Gate 1 - The portal prompts the Certification Body Assessor for proposed dates for the Theoretical, Practical, site visits and end of assessment.

Hosting and Access

Concurrent activities outside the scheme are expected to include:

- The Applicant and Assessor arranging file sharing with the Applicant hosting all submission files and granting access to their Certification Body.
- Arrange any necessary clearances for site visits or reviews of sensitive data.

Step 3: Submission Preparation

Readiness Check

Once onboarded, the Certification Body will confirm:

- That the Applicant has the latest guidance documents.
- That the Applicant has read the guidance materials.
- That the Applicant understands the scheme's requirements (e.g., answers, evidence, data storage, and any critical requirements that, if missing, could result in an automatic failure).

This confirmation must be entered on the portal to continue (see Portal Gate 2).

If the Applicant is not ready, they can end the process and focus on implementation, either with the same Certification Body or another implementer. The Applicant can return for certification later, but a new conflict-of-interest check will be required.

Preparing the Submission

The Applicant begins preparing their DCC submission, either independently or with support from a Certification Body or third party.

IASME recommend that submission preparation takes place at this stage, rather than during the earlier assessment preparation phase. This ensures the Applicant has a clear understanding of the requirements and expectations before moving forward. The assessment preparation phase focuses on tasks such as defining the scope, arranging access, and obtaining any necessary clearances.

Starting submission preparation too early may lead to errors or incomplete responses, potentially requiring revisions and delaying the process. By waiting until this stage, the risk of mistakes is reduced, resulting in a smoother and more efficient submission process.

That said, this is only a recommendation and does not prevent Applicants from reaching this stage with a submission they have already prepared.

Preparing the Assessment Submission Record

The Applicant must:

- Answer all questions using the provided options.
- Provide clear context to support your answers.
- Include evidence for each requirement.
- Add hash values for all submitted artifacts.

It is important to emphasise that both the answers and supporting evidence must be fully completed to avoid delays in the assessment process, and all information and evidence must remain on the applicant's systems.

When complete, the Applicant submits their completed Assessment Submission Record to the certification body for Theoretical scoring.

Step 4: Assessment

Prior to starting their theoretical scoring, the Certification Body outlines the roles of team members conducting the assessment on the portal and is reminded that any conflicted controls must be evaluated by the lead assessor.

Portal Gate 2

1) The portal prompts the Certification Body to enter team members, specifying their roles (e.g., Lead Assessor, Deputy Assessor).

2) The portal prompts the Certification Body to confirm that readiness checks have been completed before progressing to the Theoretical assessment.

3) *The portal reminds the Certification Body that any conflicted controls must be reviewed and assessed by the Lead Assessor.*

Theoretical Scoring

The Certification Body evaluates the Applicant's answers and evidence, offering feedback where necessary.

If additional information is required to support Practical scoring, the Certification Body will request clarifications. The Applicant can revise their answers and provide updated evidence before resubmitting for further review.

After all requested clarifications have been addressed, the Certification Body finalises the Theoretical scoring phase.

If the Applicant is likely to fail, they can end the process and focus on implementation, either with the same Certification Body or another implementer. The Applicant can return for certification later, but a new conflict-of-interest check will be required.

The process may proceed to practical scoring even if the feedback suggests the submission will fail practical.

Portal Gate 3

1) *The portal prompts the Certification Body to update the team composition, including any changes to roles or members.*

2) *The portal prompts the Certification Body to confirm how many Clarification Rounds have been completed prior to the Practical Scoring.*

3) *The portal prompts the Certification Body to update the assessment dates as needed.*

Practical Scoring

Remote demonstration: The Certification Body and Applicant arrange a remote teleconference to demonstrate the security controls in place ('show me/demonstrate').

Site visit (if required): If a site visit is identified during scoping, the Certification Body and Applicant arrange an in-person visit to demonstrate the security controls.

Final scores are recorded in the Assessment Submission Record, hosted by the Applicant. The record includes Assessor comments and evidence for any failed questions or controls (e.g. screenshots of misconfigurations).

The outcomes of practical scoring are either a PASS or a FAIL.

If the Applicant does not pass, they may opt to retry the assessment, subject to their commercial agreement, rejoining the process at the clarification round. Progression back to practical scoring is only possible by successfully completing the theoretical scoring having exited the theoretical scoring/clarification round cycle.

Final Steps

- A file hash of the Applicant's answers, evidence, and supporting documentation is created and securely stored for future attestations or recertifications. The hash must be created for one compressed file (e.g., .zip, .tar.gz, or .7z) that contains all required documents.
- The Certification Body submits the pass/fail result and the associated file hash of the completed Assessment Submission Record to the IASME portal.
- If selected, a quality review may be conducted by IASME.

Portal Gate 4

1) The portal prompts the Certification Body to confirm how many Practical Scoring retries and additional Clarification Rounds were required.

2) The Certification Body Assessor submits the assessment result.

3) The system sends an automated email to the Applicant, reminding them of the data retention and annual attestations requirements.

Step 5: Certification

Certification Outcome

The result is recorded

- **Pass:** A certificate is automatically issued through the digital certification system.

- **Fail:** No certificate is issued and the process ends. The Applicant may choose to implement changes with their Certification body and can return for certification later, but a new conflict-of-interest check will be required.

Annual Attestation and Recertification

- Certification is valid for three years.
- Annual attestation is required at the end of years 1 and 2.
- Certification expires at the end of year 3, at which point the Applicant will need to reapply.