

National Quality Mark Scheme SiLC and Suitably Qualified Persons (SQP)

SiLC Annual Forum, April 2016

**Phil Crowcroft, Hugh Mallett and
Peter Witherington**



Introduction

Content

1. Why do we need a National Quality Mark Scheme (NQMS)?
2. What will the scheme comprise?
3. What role can SiLC play?
4. The SiLC proposal for new SQPs
5. Conversion of registered SiLCs to SQPs
6. Summary



The NQMS and Competence

NPPF

Para 121. *Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that;
Adequate site investigation information prepared by competent person presented.*

Glossary. *Competent person (to prepare site investigation information) - person with recognised relevant qualification, sufficient experience in dealing with type(s) of pollution or land instability and membership of relevant professional organisation.*

No reference to competence in supplementary guidance

Part 2A Statutory Guidance

Para 3.18-3.20. Using external expertise during risk assessment

When choosing specialist consultants, local authorities should strive as far as possible to ensure they are appropriately qualified and competent to undertake the work.



Land Forum NQMS and the SQP

Land Forum has developed proposals for NQMS

Voluntary scheme – can bring real value to projects

Not a threat to public sector jobs

The NQMS will assist CLOs by;

- reducing number of poor submissions,
- helping review process by improvements in quality and consistency
- enabling focus on high risk sites or inadequate proposals

CL:AIRE has offered to undertake administration of the NQMS in terms of site registration

SiLC has offered to undertake the qualification process for SQPs.



Objectives

Objectives of NQMS

- To provide assurance to developers (who retain the legal responsibility for adequately dealing with land contamination problems) and to Regulator(s) that the risks arising from land contamination have been adequately assessed and dealt with by competent people.
- To improve the quality of reports delivered by the contaminated land industry to a level whereby Developers and Regulator(s) can better rely upon the conclusions put forward without the need for further scrutiny or auditing.



The origin of SiLC

Report of Urban Task Force : “Towards an urban renaissance”.

Identified need for “accredited specialists” to “provide reassurance that reports on land condition provide reliable information about a site.

SiLC scheme launched in 1999

Provides recognition of competence & skills of those working in land condition sector

Registered SiLC is

Senior practitioner;

- with broad awareness, knowledge and understanding of land condition issues
- provides impartial and professional advice in their field of expertise.

SiLC Register. Run & administered by Professional and Technical Panel (PTP) - representatives from all supporting professional bodies.



SiLC supporting bodies

- AGS** The Association of Geoenvironmental and Geotechnical Specialists
- CIWEM** Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management
- ICE** Institution of Civil Engineers
- CIEH** Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
- IEMA** Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
- RSC** Royal Society of Chemistry
- REHIS** Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland
- GS** Geological Society
- Others that are relevant may provide valid Chartership (eg Institution of Environmental Sciences, RICS, Institute of Biology)**



Land Forum NQMS and the SQP – SiLC Proposal

SiLC supports NQMS

- great opportunity to improve standards
- expand role of SiLCs to benefit of client developers and regulators

Key element of NQMS is competence of Suitably Qualified Person (SQP)

- SiLC offer to provide the assessment process has been accepted
- Based upon existing and well established process
- Modified / extended to meet additional competencies
- Supported by existing disciplinary and complaints procedure



The NQMS and Competence

SiLC proposals to deliver the Suitably Qualified Persons (SQP) to operate the NQMS scheme

- Agreed by Land Forum that SiLC is well-positioned to provide a mechanism to qualify new SQPs in the future;
- Over time other organisations may also wish to offer a qualification process;
- SiLC considers that the existing SiLC qualification is close to that needed for SQP, with minor additions;
- SiLC is planning to amend the existing SiLC exam process to automatically deliver SQPs;
- Successful candidates can opt to be on SiLC Register, SQP Register or both.



Competence requirements

What constitutes a SiLC / SQP

Someone with:

- a land condition specialism
- understanding of the land assessment process
- sufficient years relevant experience to develop competence
- ability to undertake or oversee land condition-related work
- **Demonstrate thorough understanding of NQMS and responsibilities of SQP**
- Chartered and a professional approach (Code of Practice).



The SQP and Competence

What constitutes a SiLC / SQP

- A senior individual – not a company
- has a high level of specific competency
 - can delegate collation and assembly of information
 - cannot delegate responsibility for quality
- Skilled in interpretation, etc.
- Not an expert/ specialist in all fields of land condition
- Able to identify gaps in data
- Knows when to seek assistance
- Can confirm competence of specialists used on a project eg SOBRA scheme



Current assessment process

Assessment occurs twice yearly

Comprises three elements;

1. Application. Demonstrate candidate meets basic requirements (qualifications, chartership, experience). Two references
2. Written examination (open book). Includes individual written submission.

Supported by; Candidate application form; candidate application guidelines; CPD guide; Examples of exam topics; Assessor guide; Introduction Day.

3. Peer interview

Supported by; Appeal procedure.

www.silc.org.uk



Conversion module for SiLC to SQP

SiLC criteria cover all the generic competencies required of a SQP
Conversion module developed to cover additional requirements of SQP

All currently registered SiLCs able to apply for conversion. Likely to be on-line training module with subsequent questions.

Additional elements of Code of Practice

12. Keep up to date with NQMS & comply with requirements when acting as SQP. Provide all information to auditor on request

- From 2016b exam additional elements incorporated into exam.
- Successful candidates automatically able to register as SQP if they wish, modest additional cost.



Summary

1. Work alongside CL:AIRE to operate scheme
2. CL;AIRE will manage registration of sites
3. SiLC will deliver competent persons
4. SiLC established process for assessment of competence supported by all relevant professional institutions
5. Conversion for existing SiLCs
6. SiLC offer to provide the assessment process.
 - Based upon existing and well established process
 - Modified / extended to meet additional competencies
 - Supported by existing disciplinary procedure
7. Great opportunity for improving standards in our industry to benefit of clients/ developers and regulators.





www.silc.org.uk