



Management processes involved in awarding the CTA Quality Mark

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Information

'*The Standards*' document has been initially compiled by CTA Staff and been subject to extensive consultation with CTA Member Organisations. The first six sets of requirements based on the Charity Commission's documents - *CC10 -The Hallmarks of an Effective Charity*. The next four sets of requirements contain the legal and best practice established by the Vehicle Operator Services Agency in particular their documents - *Guide to maintaining roadworthiness* and *PSV385 Passenger transport provided under Section 19 or Section 22 permits*. The next four sets of requirements relate to personnel and health and safety legal and best practice standards established by various parts of employment legislation and requirements issued by the Health and Safety Executive. The remaining two sets of requirements have been established from various sources as best practice for businesses in exercising their corporate social responsibility.

The requirements are divided into two Levels. Level 1 consists of legal requirements plus a minimum number of elements of best practice that have been selected to cover normal local authority contract conditions and minimise the possibility of an organisation that holds a Level 1 award being subjected to civil litigation. Level 2 contains the additional best practice requirements from the various sources mentioned.

Level 1 is available to all incorporated, independent CTA members irrespective of their legal status and is obtained following the submission of a portfolio. Level 2 is currently only available to charities, with the Charity Commission endorsement only available to registered charities in England and Wales. The CTA will be working to widen the range of organisations that can apply.

Process for obtaining the CTA Quality Mark

Prior to applying for the CTA Quality Mark, CTA member organisations are encouraged to review *The Standards* and conduct a self-assessment. This self-assessment will enable organisations to decide whether or not they make a formal application to CTA.

When organisations make an application for the CTA Quality Mark they will need to include the relevant fee, this is currently £300.00 + VAT for Level 1. They will be sent an information pack including lists of suggested evidence and the criteria that will be used to assess their application. They will also be given access to appropriate model documents that can form the basis of policies and procedures where these have not previously existed. Additional evidence may be required to show that recently adopted policies are in full operation.

The Level 1 application process will involve submitting a portfolio containing the evidence that demonstrates that their organisation meets the requirements.

The CTA, in accordance with the understandings / approvals it holds from the various endorsing authorities, will examine the portfolio and determine if sufficient evidence has been provided to show that the applicant organisation meets the requirements.

An assessment record will be created, which will show if there appears to be gaps in the evidence. This assessment record this will be sent to the applicant organisation.

The applicant organisation is then invited to send additional evidence, in the form of a submission that states:

- the evidence is covered by the original portfolio, with details of the document name and page number
- the evidence was inadvertently omitted from the original portfolio and is now submitted
- the reason why the particular requirement is not relevant to the applicant organisation
- newly created documents / policies are now provided with an undertaking signed by the chair or equal representative of the organisation that these will be immediately implemented in full

Applicant organisations must obtain Level 1 of *The Standards* before applying for Level 2. The fee for Level 2 is currently being determined but is likely to be around £1,500.00 + VAT. The Level 2 application process is in two stages. The first stage is similar to the Level 1 arrangement with the applicant organisation submitting a second portfolio. Following receipt of the Level 2 portfolio application and, if necessary any additional submission, the CTA assessor will arrange to visit the applicant organisation. Applicant organisations will be aware before the visit of the evidence that is required in order to successfully complete the process and will be able to structure the visit accordingly.

CTA's Decision Making Process

The following documents will be compiled for consideration by the Awards Panel:

- the assessment record
- any submission received from the applicant as a result of the assessment record being created
- for Level 2, a records of the evidence gathered during the site visit

The final decision to award the CTA Quality Mark will be made at an Awards Panel meeting.

Once a decision to award the CTA Quality Mark has been made, the applicant organisation will be informed in writing. The organisation will then be able to use the CTA Quality Mark logo on paperwork and web sites, etc. The CTA will issue a press release naming the organisation and explaining the award. The CTA will also write a standard letter to up to 10 organisations (based on a list provided by the successful applicant) informing them of the success in achieving the CTA Quality Mark.

The award of the CTA Quality Mark will normally be for three years. However, this time period may be shortened if there are known specific events due that may cause a significant change in the way the organisation operates (see the [‘Terms of the Award of the CTA Quality Mark’](#)).

Awards Panel

The Board of Trustees will establish an awards panel consisting of three people:

- a. The Chair of the panel will be a CTA UK Trustee appointed by the board of Trustees that is not connected with any individual member organisation. This nominee will be appointed for a three year period and may serve for a period of six years.
- b. A chief officer, or their nominee, from an organisation that has already gained a CTA Quality Mark. This appointment will normally be for one year (which may be extended to a maximum, of three years) and will be approved by the chair of the panel.
- c. The third person will be an independent member selected by the chair of the Awards Panel from a list of nominees recruited from other national organisations that use the Charity Commission’s devolved quality assurance system.

In the absence of any of the second or third members as listed above the Chair of the Awards Panel may ask another CTA trustees to fulfil either role on a temporary basis.

Decisions available to the Awards Panel

Any decisions may be made on majority basis, although this should be avoided if possible. Each meeting of the panel will be supported by CTA staff. Award Panel members will be provided with documentation as shown above.

An organisation (charitable or otherwise) cannot be recommended for accreditation if at the time of the assessment there is evidence that it has failed to meet its legal requirements. Where there is evidence of failure of a legal requirement, the

assessors and the awards panel will not accept, as evidence of the achievement of the standard, the organisation's commitment (through an action plan or otherwise) to meet that standard in the future. The legal requirement should already have been met to achieve a pass. Equally charities that do not meet charity legal requirements cannot be accredited.

Other than these two situations above we do not insist on the organisation meeting every aspect of *The Standards*, or achieving 100% of a particular Standard in order to gain accreditation. The Awards Panel will accept that there are judgements to be made on the basis of the overall evidence. The integrity of the process lies in the rigour to the assessment. Clarity about the assessment is also important for the transparency of the accreditation and for the guidance of the assessors and the assessed organisations.

The decision options for the panel will be:

1. Fully approve awarding of Mark based on the unqualified recommendation of the assessor.
2. Decide to award the Mark despite the shortcomings detailed in assessment record because they have been addressed in the written submission from the applicant organisation.
3. Decide not to award the Mark because the shortcomings detailed in assessment record are not addressed in the written submission from the organisation. For Level 2 this may also be because of the assessor's site visit report.
4. Following a decision not to award the Mark, in contentious cases where the applicant organisation feels that they could have been judged unfairly, the panel may offer an opportunity to attend the next panel meeting in order for their case to be re-considered.

The Awards Panel decision will be final unless the applicant organisation believes that the process has not been operated correctly. An appeal to the Chair of the CTA Trustees is only allowed on this basis.

A decision not to award the Mark may also be accompanied by a recommendation to re-apply following a short period when evidence of newly introduced procedures or policies can be seen to have been fully implemented.

CTA staff management, training and quality control

The CTA recognises the possible conflict of interest between:

- objectively managing the CTA Quality Mark awarding process, with the associated risk to both CTA and endorsing bodies and
- the possibility of organisations, including individual CTA members or their external funding bodies, that may commission the CTA to assist or support such an organisation to gain the award.

This conflict will be managed by the Chief Executive of the CTA.

In order to address this issue on a day-to-day basis all work associated with completing assessments will be the solely the responsibility of the Director of Learning, thereby ensuring impartial assessments and support to the Awards Panel.

The Director of Learning will provide training to any staff involved in completing assessments and will operate a quality control system on all assessment decisions.

The Director of Learning will also be responsible for initiating any reports to regulatory authorities where such action is required following an assessment. This could happen for a number of reasons; however it will specifically occur in situations where assessors become aware of serious misuse of charity assets or abuses of vulnerable people. Charities need to be aware that, although the CTA will respect the confidentiality of information gathered as part to the assessment process, assessors have an overriding duty to report serious incidents. The Director for Learning is the person the assessors will alert in such cases.

The Director for Learning will be the nominated person for any reports of inappropriate actions by CTA members holding the CTA Quality Mark. Following investigation a report will be prepared for the Awards Panel to make any final decision concerning revoking of the CTA Quality Mark when this is appropriate. Revocation will inevitably follow if any illegal activities are revealed.

Any assistance and support functions provided by the CTA for organisations wishing to gain the CTA Quality Mark will normally be managed by the Director for Consultancy or the relevant country Director.

Terms of Award of the CTA Quality Mark

The following terms will be included in the letter granting the CTA Quality Mark to a CTA member organisation.

1. The award of the CTA Quality Mark has been awarded to it cannot be transferred to any successor or re-named organisation.
2. The CTA Quality Mark applies until three years after the date of this letter.
3. The CTA reserves the right to withdraw the Mark in the following circumstances:
 - a. The evidence provided to gain the award either a portfolio or verbal evidence collected during a site visit is subsequently shown to be false.
 - b. Any action or lack of action on the part of the above named organisation reveals that it is operating outside the legislation. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - i. Failing to submit timely accounts to the relevant regulator.
 - ii. Failing to have sufficient number of Trustees, Directors or management committee members to fulfil the terms of the constitutional document.
 - a. The reputation of the CTA or of any endorsing body is, or is likely to be, damaged, for example through a serious breach of *The Standards*.

- And -

- b. No satisfactory mitigation or explanation has been provided for any of the above circumstances.
4. The organisation shown above is authorised to use the CTA Quality Mark logo on letterheads, publicity material, web sites and vehicles. Brand guidelines for the use of the logo will be provided separately and must be followed. The logos of endorsing bodies shown on the certificate enclosed cannot be reproduced separately. The fact that the CTA Quality Mark is endorsed by various bodies can be stated on publicity, etc. Copies of the certificate can be provided to contracting and funding bodies but cannot be duplicated for exhibition in premises or vehicles. Additional copies of the certificate can be purchased from the CTA for exhibition in other premises where the organisation operates from more than one location.
5. The CTA will write a standard letter to up to ten organisations or people nominated by the above named organisation informing them of the success in achieving the CTA Quality Mark. The CTA will also be issuing press releases but no guarantee is given on the timing of such announcements

Review of ‘The Standards’

Under the terms of any endorsement from external bodies, *The Standards* document cannot be changed.

A review will take place prior to a three year renewal application to the endorsing bodies. Users of *The Standards* may suggest possible changes for this review to consider at any time. These should be addressed to the Director for Learning at CTA.

The CTA may issue additional guidance concerning the suggested evidence and criteria document to clarify any issue that causes misunderstanding. This will be in footnote format.