



ENGINEERING SERVICES



# SCHEME HANDBOOK



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## Introduction

Engineering Services SKILLcard Limited (Engineering Services SKILLcard) is a private limited company (registration 04162544) and is a member of the BESA Group of companies.

SKILLcard is the industry-recognised card issuing and personnel registration scheme for people working in the mechanical sector of the building engineering services industry throughout the UK.

Engineering Services SKILLcard is a partner of the pan-industry Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS). The terms of partnership ensure that Engineering Services SKILLcard complies with the requirements of CSCS. This means there is no need for a separate registration with CSCS for members of the SKILLcard Scheme.

## The SKILLcard Scheme

### Scheme Aims

The SKILLcard Scheme aims to provide you with the following benefits:

- Using smartcards can help improve health and safety onsite by ensuring workers have the right qualifications for the job they do, and by eliminating the possibility of fake cards being used to access sites. The scheme keeps a database of those working within the recognised industry that have a recognised qualification, are working towards a qualification or who assist a qualified engineer.
- Checking you have the right qualifications for the work you do is quicker, easier and less time-consuming using smartcards.

### Smart Technology

- There are many benefits to using smart cards. They can help save time on site (by making it easier to check the validity of a card), hold a worker's qualifications and training in one place, and reduce the use of fake cards.



## Who can apply for a SKILLcard?

Anybody working in the heating, ventilating, air conditioning and refrigeration industry, including ductwork and other specialisms associated with the building engineering services industry - such as service and facilities, domestic heating and plumbing, and refrigeration and air conditioning can apply for a SKILLcard. The scope of SKILLcard also covers those with supervisory and managerial responsibilities in the building engineering services industry.

You do not have to be employed in order to register. You could be self-employed, an agency worker or unemployed.

Registration with the SKILLcard Scheme is confirmed through the issue of a SKILLcard in accordance with the [SKILLcard Terms and Conditions](#).

### Occupations covered

- Building Services Engineering Ductwork Installer/Craftsperson
- Building Services Engineering Installer/Craftsperson
- Building Services Engineering (Welding) Installer/Craftsperson
- Building Services Engineering Service & Maintenance Engineer
- Building Services Engineering Technician (previously known as Commissioning Engineer / Technician)
- Domestic Heating Installer/Fitter/Service Engineer  
Fire Sprinkler Installer
- Fire Sprinkler Installer
- Gas Fitter Domestic/Industrial & Commercial
- Plumber Domestic/Industrial & Commercial
- Refrigeration/Air Conditioning Technician/Engineer
- Refrigerant Handler
- Ventilation Hygiene Technician
- Supervisory, Managerial, Professionally and Academically qualified occupations are also available, for further information [find out here](#)

## Types of SKILLcard available

The SKILLcard Scheme currently offers the following types of SKILLcard.

- [Red – Trainee](#)
- [Red – Industry Placement](#)
- [Green – Mate](#)
- [White – ACRIB Refrigerant Handler](#)
- [Blue – Skilled Worker](#)
- [Blue – Experienced Worker](#)
- [Blue – ACRIB/SKILLcard Refrigeration/Air Conditioning Engineer](#)
- [Gold - Advanced Craft](#)
- [Gold – Supervisor](#)
- [Gold - ACRIB/SKILLcard Refrigeration/Air Conditioning Engineer](#)
- [Black – Manager](#)
- [White – Professionally Qualified Person \(PQP\)](#)
- [White Academically Qualified Person \(AQP\)](#)

The following cards have been withdrawn or are in the process of being withdrawn. [Find out more here](#)

- **Yellow – Site Visitors**
- **White – Construction Related Occupation**



### RED TRAINEE CARD

This card is for new entrant trainees who:

- Have no prior experience and are registered for a relevant Apprenticeship Standard, NVQ or SVQ; or towards an HNC or Degree but have not yet achieved the qualification.
- Adult Trainees.
- Student Engineers training to be Project Engineers/Project Managers who have not yet achieved the relevant NC or higher level qualification.
- HNC and Degree undergraduates or Higher or Degree Apprentices.

In the case of (a), the employer must sign an endorsement that the Trainee has undertaken basic site safety induction training.

In the case of (b),(c), and (d) applicants will need to demonstrate compliance with the [SKILLcard health and safety requirements\\*](#).

*\*Exemption; Red Trainee card - a trainee enrolled onto a NVQ/SVQ/Apprenticeship Standard is not required to take a separate H&S test unless a SKILLcard is required more than two months prior to the college start date.*

#### Validity

This card is valid for five years and is non-renewable.

Trainees are expected to upgrade to a Blue/Gold SKILLcard when the Apprenticeship Standard/NVQ/SVQ Level 2/3 is achieved.

Student Engineers are expected to upgrade to a Gold (Supervisory) SKILLcard on completion of their training.

HNC and Degree Apprentices or students are expected to upgrade to the White Academically Qualified Persons (AQP) SKILLcard when their qualification is achieved.



### RED INDUSTRY PLACEMENT CARD

This card is for students who are enrolled onto a qualification or training programme requiring a minimum of 30 days' work placement, including T Levels, Traineeships, Foundation and Progression Qualifications (Wales) and Sandwich Degrees.

#### Validity

Applicants must be aged 16 or above.

The card is valid for three years and is non-renewable.

All applicants must meet the [SKILLcard health and safety requirements](#).



### GREEN MATE CARD

This card is issued to those carrying out basic site work only. It shows that the cardholder has met the SKILLcard health and safety requirements and can carry out basic site skills.

All applicants must meet the [SKILLcard health and safety requirements](#).

#### Validity

This card is valid for five years and is renewable upon application, subject to SKILLcard [Renewal Rules](#).



### WHITE ACRIB REFRIGERANT HANDLER CARD

Engineering Services SKILLcard and the Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Industry Board (ACRIB) offer a joint badged ACRIB/SKILLcard designed for registered Operatives competent to handle refrigerants.

Applicants must hold appropriate qualifications, for example:

- City and Guilds 2079 (Cat1)
- BESA Academy F-Gas (Cat 1)
- Appropriate unit of NVQ or 7189 as recognised by DEFRA
- Logic 603/1917/3 (Cat1)

All applicants must meet the [SKILLcard health and safety requirements](#).

Cards can also feature additional refrigeration related qualifications such as those covering brazing, electrical and REAL Zero.

#### Validity

This card is valid for three years and is renewable upon application, subject to SKILLcard [Renewal Rules](#).



## BLUE SKILLED WORKER CARD

This card is issued if you are a:

- Modern Apprentice with relevant Apprenticeship Standard/NVQ/SVQ; or
- Skilled worker with relevant Apprenticeship Standard/NVQ/SVQ; or
- Skilled worker with an informal apprenticeship and a City and Guilds craft certificate appropriate to your trade; or
- Skilled worker without formal qualifications but who originally obtained a SKILLcard by Industry Accreditation (sometimes referred to as 'grandfather rights').

All applicants must meet the

[SKILLcard health and safety requirements.](#)

### Validity

This card is valid for five years and is renewable upon application, subject to SKILLcard [Renewal Rules](#).



## BLUE EXPERIENCED WORKER CARD

This card is issued to those who have missed the chance to obtain a SKILLcard by Industry Accreditation (sometimes referred to as 'grandfather rights') and who have no formal industry qualifications.

To get a SKILLcard by the Experienced Worker route you will need to register for an NVQ/SVQ Level 2 or 3 relevant to your trade or occupation and complete an NVQ/SVQ profile with an assessor.

All applicants must meet the

[SKILLcard health and safety requirements.](#)

### Validity

This card is valid for three years and is non-renewable.

This card is issued while an NVQ/SVQ is being achieved. It should be replaced by a five-year SKILLcard on achievement of NVQ/SVQ Level 2 or higher.



## BLUE/GOLD ACRIB/SKILLCARD REFRIGERATION/AIR CONDITIONING ENGINEER

Engineering Services SKILLcard and the Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Industry Board (ACRIB) offer a joint badged ACRIB/SKILLcard which incorporates the requirements of the ACRIB Register of Refrigerant Handling Operatives with those of SKILLcard.

A **Blue** card is issued if you are a:

- Skilled worker with Apprenticeship Standard NVQ/SVQ Level 2; or
- Skilled worker with an informal apprenticeship and a City and Guilds craft certificate appropriate to your trade

A **Gold** card is issued if you are a:

- Skilled worker with NVQ/SVQ Level 3; or
- Skilled worker with an indentured apprenticeship; or
- Skilled worker with an informal apprenticeship and a City and Guilds or SCOTVEC (SQA) advanced craft certificate appropriate to your trade

### Primary qualifications accepted:

- C&G Level 2 NVQ Diploma in Installing and Maintaining Refrigeration Systems (6187)
- C&G Level 2 NVQ Diploma in Installing, Testing & Maintaining AC & HP Systems (6187)
- C&G Level 2 NVQ Diploma in RACHP systems (7189-02)
- C&G (VRQ) Level 2 or 3 Diploma in RACHP systems (7189)
- C&G Level 2 Diploma in RACHP systems (6090-20)
- C&G Level 3 Diploma in RACHP systems (6090-30)
- C&G Level 3 NVQ in Installing and Commissioning AC & HP Systems
- C&G Level 3 NVQ in Installing and Commissioning Refrigeration Systems (6187)
- C&G Level 3 NVQ Certificate in Servicing and Maintaining AC and HP Systems (6187)
- C&G Level 3 NVQ Diploma in Servicing and Maintaining Refrigeration Systems (6187)

...continued overleaf



### BLUE/GOLD ACRIB/SKILLCARD ...continued

Applicants must also hold appropriate F-Gas qualifications (if not included in their primary qualification): - for example:

- City and Guilds 2079
- BESA Academy F-Gas (Cat 1)
- Appropriate unit of NVQ or 7189 as recognised by DEFRA
- Logic 603/1917/3 (Cat1)

All applicants must meet the

[SKILLcard health and safety requirements](#).

Cards can also feature additional refrigeration related qualifications such as those covering additional refrigerants, brazing, electrical and REAL Zero.

#### Validity

These cards are valid for five years and are renewable upon application, subject to SKILLcard [Renewal Rules](#).

### GOLD ADVANCED CRAFT CARD

A Gold SKILLcard is available if you are a:

- Skilled worker with an Apprenticeship Standard/ NVQ/SVQ Level 3
- Skilled worker with an indentured apprenticeship
- Skilled worker with an informal apprenticeship and a City and Guilds or SCOTVEC (SQA) advanced craft certificate appropriate to your trade



All applicants must meet the [SKILLcard health and safety requirements](#).

#### Validity

This card is valid for five years and is renewable upon application, subject to SKILLcard [Renewal Rules](#).

### BLACK MANAGER CARD

This card is available for the following managerial occupations:

- Contracts Manager
- Commissioning Manager
- Project Engineer
- Project Manager
- Quantity Surveyor
- Service and Maintenance Manager
- Building Services Design Engineer
- Building Services Engineering Site Management



To qualify for a Black (Manager) SKILLcard, applicants will need to hold a management qualification at Level 4 or above, such as a Degree/HNC/HND/NVQ/SVQ Level 4/5 appropriate to the occupation being applied for.

[Visit the website](#) for the full list of approved Managerial qualifications.

All applicants must meet the

[SKILLcard health and safety requirements](#).

#### Validity

This card is valid for five years and is renewable upon application, subject to SKILLcard [Renewal Rules](#).

### GOLD SUPERVISOR CARD

This card is available for the following supervisory occupations:

- Team Leader (previously Foreman)
- Building Services Engineer Supervisor (previously Firstline Supervisor)
- Building Services Technician (previously Senior Commissioning Engineer)



### Team Leaders, Building Services Engineer Supervisors and Building Services Technicians

In order to qualify for a Gold (Supervisory) SKILLcard, applicants will need to hold a Building Services Engineering supervisory qualification at Level 3 or above such as a Degree/HNC/HND/NVQ/SVQ Level 3/4/5 appropriate to the occupation being applied for.

[Visit the website](#) to view the full list of Supervisory qualifications.

These cards are colour-coded Gold on the basis of NVQ/SVQ Level 3 and are renewable upon application, subject to SKILLcard renewal rules.

All applicants must meet the

[SKILLcard health and safety requirements](#).

#### Validity

This card is valid for five years and is renewable upon application, subject to SKILLcard [Renewal Rules](#).



### WHITE PROFESSIONALLY QUALIFIED PERSON (PQP) CARD

This card is available to Building Services Engineers who meet the corporate membership standards of SKILLcard [approved Professional Bodies](#).

To apply for this card Applicants will need to supply proof that they hold current membership of the professional body at a level accepted by SKILLcard, by providing one of the following:

- A membership certificate
- A membership card (if issued)
- A current year letter or email from the professional body

For renewals, Applicants must supply a letter or email from the professional body confirming that they are still a member of the organisation.

All applicants must meet the Managerial and Professional [SKILLcard health and safety requirements](#).

#### Validity

This card is valid for five years and is renewable upon application, subject to SKILLcard [Renewal Rules](#).

### WHITE ACADEMICALLY QUALIFIED PERSON (AQP) CARD

This card is available to Building Services Engineers who hold an identified SKILLcard [approved academic qualification](#).

Applicants will need to supply proof that they hold one of the academic qualifications approved by SKILLcard, by providing a copy of the qualification certificate.

All applicants must meet the Managerial and Professional [SKILLcard health and safety requirements](#).

#### Validity

This card is valid for five years and is renewable upon application, subject to SKILLcard [Renewal Rules](#).



### WHITE CONSTRUCTION RELATED OCCUPATION (CRO) CARD

This card is intended to cover ancillary occupations related to the heating, ventilating, air conditioning and refrigeration contracting industry which include activities of such a specialist nature that no full NVQ or SVQ exists, nor are there any identified NVQ/SVQ Units relevant to those occupations.

This card is available to new applicants for the following occupations:

- Compressed Air Installer/Maintainer/Commissioning Engineer
- Lubricant/Compressed Air Pipework Installer

All applicants must meet the [SKILLcard health and safety requirements](#).

#### Validity

This card is valid for three years. The card is renewable upon application, subject to SKILLcard [Renewal Rules](#).

Please note that the CRO card is now in a phased closure programme. Each occupation is under review and as new qualification routes are identified, cards will be closed. For more details please see our dedicated [CRO Closure page](#).



## OVERSEAS QUALIFICATIONS

If you have overseas qualifications which you believe are equivalent to the qualifications required for a SKILLcard, simply use the mapping service available from ECCTIS to obtain an Industry Skills Statement. (ECCTIS was formerly known as UK Naric.)

To find out more about overseas qualifications, please visit the [SKILLcard website](#).

## INDUSTRY ACCREDITATION (ALSO KNOWN AS THE GRANDFATHER RIGHTS)

### Trade card

This route closed to new applicants in 2006 with the exception of the Building Services Technician occupation (previously Commissioning Engineer / Technician) which closed in 2022 – trade cards issued through industry accreditation are renewable, subject to SKILLcard [Renewal Rules](#).

### Managers card

The Managers cards issued through industry accreditation are renewable, subject to SKILLcard [Renewal Rules](#).

### Supervisors card

Supervisor cards issued through industry accreditation are renewable, they require a short course in supervisory management in addition to the industry accreditation and are subject to to SKILLcard [Renewal Rules](#).

# Applications

To apply for a SKILLcard applicants need to be working in the heating, ventilating, air conditioning and refrigeration industry, including ductwork and other specialisms associated with the building engineering services industry - such as service and facilities, domestic heating and plumbing, and refrigeration and air conditioning. The scope of SKILLcard also covers those with supervisory and managerial responsibilities in the building engineering services industry.

Applicants need to prove they have the training and qualifications required for the type of work they undertake on site as detailed in this Handbook. The level of qualification will determine which type of card is required.

APPLICATION

APPLICATION  
REVIEW

QUALITY  
ASSURANCE  
COMPLETED

SKILLcard  
ISSUED

## Health and Safety Requirements

All applicants (both new and renewals) must pass the appropriate level of Health and Safety test within the last two years, unless you qualify for an exemption listed in the next column.

The tests are designed to give everybody working on site a minimum level of health & safety awareness.

There are two types of Health and Safety tests which meet the requirements for a SKILLcard:

- BESA Health and Safety Environment Online Test *(not applicable for Managerial / Supervisory or Professional cards).*
- CITB Health, Safety and Environment Test

For more information and to book [click here](#).

## Exemptions

You may satisfy the health and safety requirements of SKILLcard if you have undertaken appropriate certified health and safety training within the last two years. This can include any of the courses below:

### For operatives and trainees/apprentices:

- Client Contractors National Safety Group (CCNSG) two day Safety Passport Scheme course
- CITB Supervisory Site Safety Training Scheme (SSSTS) course
- CITB Site Management Safety Training Scheme (SMSTS) course
- Institute of Safety & Health (IOSH) Managing Safely
- National Examination Board of Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) Construction Certificate

### For supervisory cards:

- CITB Supervisory Site Safety Training Scheme (SSSTS) course
- CITB Site Management Safety Training Scheme (SMSTS) course
- Client Contractors National Safety Group (CCNSG) two day Safety Passport Scheme course
- National Examination Board of Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) Construction Certificate
- Institute of Safety & Health (IOSH) Managing Safely

### For managerial level cards:

- CITB Site Management Safety Training Scheme (SMSTS) course
- Client Contractors National Safety Group (CCNSG) two day Safety Passport Scheme course
- National Examination Board of Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) Construction Certificate
- Institute of Safety & Health (IOSH) Managing Safely

## Card Renewals

Your SKILLcard is your licence to work. You can use it to prove to employers that you have the skills, qualifications and experience to do your job well, and safely. So it's more important than ever to keep it up to date.

### Card renewal period

Applicants now have 12 months from expiry to renew their card.

Cards obtained via industry accreditation, which are not renewed within the period outlined above, will not be able to reapply for a new card via industry accreditation.

### Preconditions

Applicants will be required to obtain the relevant qualification for the type of work they undertake on site and will need to pass the relevant health and safety test.

#### PLEASE NOTE:

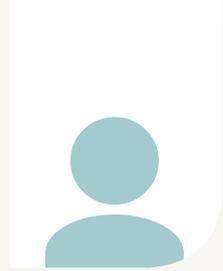
**The qualification criteria may have changed since your previous card was issued and therefore, we may not be able to renew as the same card again unless you meet the current qualification criteria.**

## Applying Online

### Supporting Documentation

We recommend before you commence your online application, please ensure you have the following available.

- A passport standard photograph saved to your computer
- An electronic copy of your health and safety certificate saved to your computer
- NVQ / SVQ / Apprenticeship Standard or equivalent registration details if applying for the Red Trainee SKILLcard or the Blue Experienced Worker's SKILLcard
- An electronic copy of any qualifications/certificates you may hold, saved to your computer
- Name and address of your employing organisation or an organisation you are sub-contracting to
- A contact name and email address of a Manager supporting your application
- Credit/Debit card details
- Once you have submitted your online evidence to SKILLcard, your application is not complete until your 'employer's endorsement' has been approved and submitted online.
- Incomplete applications will be withdrawn after six months.



### Photo Guide

Your photo must:

- be clear, in focus and in colour
- be a close-up of your full head and upper shoulders
- contain no other objects or people
- be in clear contrast to the background
- be one of the following file types: jpg / png / jpeg / bmp / gif
- be no more than 4MB in size

You must:

- be facing forward and looking straight at the camera
- have your eyes open, visible and free from reflection or glare from glasses
- not have hair in front of your eyes
- not have a head covering (unless it's for religious or medical reasons)
- not have anything covering your face

Your application may be delayed if your photo does not meet these guidelines.

### Employer's endorsement

#### (i) New applications

On completion of the application an endorsement will be required from the employer. The employer will need to approve the endorsement BEFORE the application will be processed and card produced. We require information of a manager/director who can endorse the application, full name, company name and address they work for, position, email and telephone number. We will then email an online endorsement to them, they can be from within your company or companies you contract to.

If you are self-employed you must ensure that your employer's endorsement is completed by your current/previous employer or an organisation you are sub-contracting to. The person is required to be a manager of appropriate senior authority.

You cannot sign your own endorsement.

The guide to endorsement can be viewed [here](#).

#### (ii) Renewal applications

Renewal applications do not require a signed endorsement in order to complete a renewal, but we retain the right to verify your application with your current or most recent employer.

Please provide details of your current or most recent employer. If you are self-employed please provide details of your most recent contracted employer.

### Application Fees and SKILLcard fees

The cost of SKILLcard is as stated on [the website](#) and may change from time to time.

## Updates/Upgrades

To upgrade a card following completion of an NVQ/SVQ/ Apprenticeship Standard or equivalent [click here](#), providing that the relevant health and safety has been provided a new 5 year expiry card will be issued.

If the health and safety requirement has not been met the original card may be upgraded retaining its original expiry date.

An update of a current card will retain its original expiry date. To upgrade/update a card, you can [apply online](#).

### Lost Cards

It is the responsibility of the cardholder to keep their information up to date. Cardholders can email a change of details to [skillcard.info@thebesa.com](mailto:skillcard.info@thebesa.com) or call the helpline 01768 860406.

Some changes will require supporting evidence. To replace a lost or damaged card use the online application and select Replacement (lost card) from the dropdown when starting an application.

The cost for issuing a replacement card is as stated on the website [here](#).

The SKILLcard '[Check a card](#)' online card checking facility can be used to prove to an employer or site that you hold a current card.

### ISO:9001

SKILLcard complies to the ISO 9001:2015 Quality Policy and Quality Management System. For more information [see here](#).

## Fraudulent Cards

If employers are presented with a fraudulent card they should contact us immediately at [skillcard.info@thebesa.com](mailto:skillcard.info@thebesa.com) or call 01768 860406.

There are four ways you can check if a SKILLcard is valid:

- Using Smart Technology, you can check a card using a smartphone, tablet, or card reader (connected to a laptop/desktop) when you download the Go Smart apps. [You can download them here](#)  
You can purchase a card reader from the supplier recommended by CSCS. Click [here](#) to be taken to the website.



- The new CSCS Smart Check App, please visit the website for further information by clicking [here](#)
- Online, if you're looking to check a card holder's name, card type(s) held and qualifications, you can check online via our quick [card checker tool](#).
- Via our helpdesk email [skillcard.info@thebesa.com](mailto:skillcard.info@thebesa.com) or call 01768 860406

## Contact Us

You can contact Engineering Services SKILLcard by:

- sending an email to [skillcard.info@theBESA.com](mailto:skillcard.info@theBESA.com); or
- filling out and submitting the [online contact form](#); or
- calling us on 01768 860406 (our telephone lines are open Monday to Friday: 9 am to 5 pm, except on bank holidays).

If you have a complaint or wish to appeal a decision made by us, you must follow the procedure set out in our [Complaints & Appeals Policy](#).



[www.skillcard.org.uk/](http://www.skillcard.org.uk/)



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