

# Power Skills Scheme

## Governance and Scheme Overview



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## 1. Background

The 'Competency Accord' was signed by sector companies and key partners in 2011 as the first stage in the development of a competency based management system that could be adopted across the power industry.

There is a long history of support within the sector for competence-based training schemes, however, until the launch of this new scheme, there was no initiative to create a universally accepted skills or competency recognition or registration scheme.

In the sector, workers move contracts and/or employers and are often subject to training and assessment processes for competencies which may have already been demonstrated with a previous employer; additionally, contractors' or sub-contractors' employees are subjected to multiple and duplicated training and assessment. Whilst some of this additional training is appropriate to maintain health and safety standards, it is generally accepted that this is unsustainable and significant training centre resource is devoted to what is sometimes an unnecessary duplication of activity.

The creation of common and readily available training schemes, together with registration on EUSR - a training and skills register that captures individual's training and assessment records - provides a significant opportunity for the sector to create common requirements, raise workforce competency levels, reduce risk and waste.

The first standardised training schemes of the competency accord were Utility SHEA Power and BESC AME (Access, Movement and Egress); the continuous development of competency accord is maintained through the development of this new standardised training scheme, the NSAP Power Skills scheme.

This scheme provides access to EUSR for employers to check and/or confirm the validity of the training and assessment of workers involved in craft activities.

## 2. Signatories

This scheme has been developed collaboratively by the following members of the NSAP Competency Accord Group.

From the date of signing, these signatories will recognise and promote this scheme among their supply chain as the initial requirement for achieving core industry skills and knowledge.

ORGANISATION NAME	NAME OF SIGNATORY	JOB TITLE	SIGNATURE AND DATE
Electricity North West Limited			
National Grid			
Northern Powergrid			
Scottish Power Energy Networks			
Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN)			
UK Power Networks			
Energy Networks Association			

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Note: NSAP is currently working with the Energy Networks Association (ENA) to ensure the scheme has buy in and support from all parts of the industry. The following statement outlines the current position:

*'To be successful it is essential that the Competency Accord scheme has, and maintains, alignment with industry good practice and developments. To deliver this outcome the Training and Competency Committee of the Energy Networks Association (ENA) will review and endorse the Competency Accord scheme.'*

*'In the unlikely event that the ENA Training and Competency Committee is not able to endorse part of the Competency Accord scheme; it will publish a position paper that makes clear by exception the part(s) of the scheme not endorsed.'*

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### 3. Overview of the NSAP Power Skills Scheme

As part of the development of the NSAP Power Skills Scheme, the Competency Accord Group defined the requirements essential to ensuring recognised levels of skills and knowledge for workers, which would support DNOs/TOs in their assessment of competence and their authorisation processes. The Group agreed that the standards from the Power Network Craftsperson apprenticeship for England would be adopted for this scheme.

To avoid any confusion, it was also agreed that, for the purpose of this scheme, the standards would be referred to as 'scheme standards'. Assessing workers against agreed national skills standards facilitates the easy movement of staff between signatories of this scheme – and their contractors and sub-contractors.

Whilst each DNO/TO will maintain flexibility in regard to the DNO/TO training that will be needed to access their respective networks, each participating DNO/TO shares the aspiration to reduce the amount of training a worker needs before being considered for DNO/TO accreditation. A participating DNO will accept the EUSR registration as a demonstration of an individual's skills and knowledge, negating the need for duplication of initial training in order to achieve core competence.

When moving between organisations, individuals who already hold an EUSR registration for the Power Skills scheme will only be required to undertake (and achieve) one skills assessment for a work activity; they will not be subject to additional formal skills assessments against those skills for which they are already registered on EUSR.

This scheme can be used to support worker development. As workers are assessed against the activities they can have their EUSR Registration updated, and, therefore, be

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recognised for each competence that they hold; this could also potentially reduce the period of future training required to achieve the full apprenticeship requirements.

The scheme requires workers to be assessed by Energy and Utility Skills approved providers (with the exception of individuals claiming registration on the scheme via 'Grandfather Rights'); organisations undertaking training and skills assessments must have Energy and Utility Skills provider approval and all training materials must also be approved via a product approval process.

In addition, all individuals undertaking skills assessments only must be assessed by an Energy and Utility Skills approved assessor.

An EUSR registration does not exempt an individual from undertaking additional training or familiarisation activities if these are required by their employer and/or DNO/TO; such activity is totally at the discretion of the employer and/or DNO/TO in terms of content and duration and will be dependent upon the role and activities to be undertaken by the individual.

The scheme does not replace any company authorisation process, where additional, specific needs are required by the company.

All providers delivering any of the units within this scheme must be NSAP approved; all training programmes must be approved by NSAP.

The Grandfather Rights route to registration requires that individuals have successfully undertaken a recognised, basic health & safety awareness programme/qualification as a pre-requisite to registration. The Apprenticeship route, Approved programme route and Assessment only routes to registration require that individuals have successfully undertaken a recognised, basic health & safety awareness programme/qualification prior to learning and assessment.

The scheme makes available the units currently comprising the Level 3 Power Network Craftsperson Trailblazer Apprenticeship. Unlike the apprenticeship, however, the scheme does not require any completion of a specific combination of units. There are no requirements to cover any number of specified units across any one or all of the registration categories of units. The learner can take as many or as few units as required from within each registration category or across categories to best fit their employer's and/or their own personal skills and knowledge development requirements.

More detailed information and guidance is contained within the NSAP Power Skills Scheme Technical Specification.

## 4. Governance

The 'NSAP Competency Accord Group' is a sub-group of the 'NSAP Transmission & Distribution Network Group' and is the collective decision making body responsible for defining, and agreeing any changes to, the NSAP Power Skills Scheme Governance and Scheme Overview.

The members of the 'NSAP Competency Accord Group' will:

- review the 'Governance and Scheme Overview', and other scheme documents, every three years or more often if significant changes are required or the scheme's validity requires further consideration
- consider all matters requiring the agreement of the participating organisations in the scheme

Decision-making will be on a one member – one vote basis; if consensus is not gained, then the matter will be escalated to the NSAP Strategy Group.

In relation to the determination of Grandfather Rights, each participating organisation will appoint, and seek approval from NSAP for, a 'Nominating Officer', someone with appropriate work experience and significant technical competence; in larger organisations there may be more than one Nominating Officer.

## 5. Registration

### 5.1 EUSR Registration within the Power Skills Scheme

Individuals will be registered on EUSR, once successfully assessed, for either / all Utility SHEA Power, BESC AME and NSAP Power Skills Scheme.

Only the name of SHEA Power, BESC AME and NSAP Power Skills Scheme will be included on the EUSR card and not the detail of the groups / units / categories included within them; these can be viewed by individuals and / or employers interrogating an individual's EUSR registration on the EUSR website.

### 5.2 Routes to Registration within the Power Skills Scheme

There are four routes to registration:

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### 5.2.1 NSAP Approved Programme

- This route is for individuals both new to the industry or those undertaking new learning in relation to up-skilling. This route is for those individuals needing to take a programme of learning prior to assessment
- The Approved programme route to registration requires that individuals have successfully undertaken a recognised, basic health & safety awareness programme/qualification as a part of their overall programme of learning and/or assessment
- The individual is assessed against the industry standards by a NSAP approved provider on a NSAP approved programme – either for the first time or for additional categories eg up-skilling
- If this is the first time the individual is registered against the scheme, following successful assessment EUS will process the registration and issue the individual with an EUSR card including an endorsement for the NSAP Power Skills Scheme. However, if the individual holds an EUSR card which already includes NSAP Power Skills Scheme, a new card will not be issued; the new categories will be added to their existing registration for this scheme and available for interrogation via the on-line EUSR registration search
- When moving between organisations, individuals who already hold an EUSR registration for the Power Skills scheme should not be subject to additional formal skills assessments against those skills for which they are already registered on EUSR

### 5.2.2 Assessment Only

- This route is for those individuals who are already considered competent and require assessment only
- The Assessment only route to registration requires that individuals have successfully undertaken a recognised, basic health & safety awareness programme/qualification as a part of their overall programme of learning and/or assessment
- The individual is assessed against the standards by an NSAP approved assessor representing an NSAP-approved provider
- If this is the first time the individual is registered against the scheme, following successful assessment EUS will process the registration and issue the individual with an EUSR card including an endorsement for the NSAP Power Skills Scheme. However, if the individual holds an EUSR card which already includes NSAP Power Skills Scheme, a new card will not be issued; the new categories will be added to their existing registration for this scheme and available for interrogation via the on-line EUSR registration search



- When moving between organisations, individuals who already hold an EUSR registration for the Power Skills scheme should not be subject to additional formal skills assessments against those skills for which they are already registered on EUSR

### 5.2.3 Grandfather Rights

- This route enables experienced, competent individuals to ensure their knowledge and skills are captured and accredited against the scheme. This route is open for an initial period only
- The Grandfather Rights route to registration requires that individuals have successfully undertaken a recognised, basic health & safety awareness programme/qualification prior to registration with Energy & Utility Skills
- Organisations submitting individuals for Grandfather Rights do not need to be NSAP-approved
- The employer aligns the individual's knowledge and skills against the agreed scheme standards and develops an evidence matrix
- The evidence matrix is reviewed by the employer's Nominating Officer who is first approved by NSAP in the role
- If the Nominating Officer accepts the evidence matrix as proof that the individual meets the required knowledge and/or skills standards, they will sign a declaration and submit to EUSR on behalf of the individual – the declaration also demonstrates the individual holds a current DNO Authorisation
- EUSR will record the declaration against an individual's registration adding 'GR' against the relevant record
- This route is time bound and only open for registration to an organisation's employees until September 2022. After this date, all employees, regardless of their length of service, role or experience will have to register on the scheme through either the NSAP Approved Programme route or the Assessment only route
- If the individual already has an EUSR registration, then NSAP Power Skills Scheme will be added to the individual's EUSR registration and a new card issued.

### 5.2.4 Power Network Craftsperson – Level 3

- Any individual who has completed this Apprenticeship and is – or becomes – registered on EUSR will already meet the requirements of this scheme

- If the individual already has an EUSR registration, then NSAP Power Skills Scheme will be added to the individual's EUSR registration and a new card issued.

### 5.3 Renewal of Registrations

Registrations must be renewed every six years to ensure that individuals still have the required knowledge and / or competency. Renewal will consist of successful assessment by an NSAP-approved training provider of an individual's knowledge and skills relevant to their role and current unit profile.

Where individuals have not been performing a role on a day to day basis, then they may need to receive further upskilling training before they undertake the relevant assessment.

#### Note on Grandfather Rights

Grandfathers will be expected to renew their registration through undertaking the above knowledge and skills assessment relevant to their role and unit profile. On successfully passing this assessment, Grandfathers' GR status will be removed for the purposes of registration.

## 6. Energy & Utility Skills – NSAP Approved Programmes

All providers and products must be NSAP approved in order to deliver the schemes (i.e. BESC AME and SHEA Power) and units relating to the NSAP Power Skills Scheme.

As part of the approval process, NSAP will verify that:

- i) The required equipment and resources are in place to support delivery on a unit by unit basis
- ii) The delivery programme developed by providers is compliant with NSAP requirements and
- iii) All delivery materials map fully to the prescribed knowledge and performance criteria of the units

In addition, where providers are using their own assessment and delivery material, a mapping document must be provided which confirms alignment to the performance and knowledge criteria to which it is linked.

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The submitting provider agrees to comply with performance, knowledge and understanding criteria, rules and procedures associated with the product being delivered and assessed, as well as periodic updates that will be communicated.

Simulation must be undertaken in a Real Working Environment (RWE). A RWE is "an environment which replicates the key characteristics in which the skill to be assessed is normally employed". The RWE must provide conditions the same as the normal day-to-day working environment, with a similar range of demands, pressures and requirements for cost-effective working.

Trainers/assessors must have, or be working towards, a valid training/assessor qualification or unit from any of the current nationally-recognised qualifications.

Trainers/assessors within a provider must additionally be able to demonstrate through their CV vocational knowledge, experience and understanding of current field operations and experience of carrying out training/assessments within the power industry.

The submitting provider must demonstrate appropriate mechanisms for internal quality assurance procedures which, as a minimum, will include:

- Appropriate internal quality assurance (IQA) arrangements are put in place to ensure that the work of assessors can be reviewed and standardised. This would include arrangements for identifying appropriately qualified and experienced Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs)
- Regular meetings of assessors and IQAs where the assessment strategy and any issues are discussed and reviewed. Records of these meetings, either in the form of minutes, or updates issued to all assessors must be maintained
- Annual observation arrangements in relation to both delivery and each assessor carrying out assessments.
- Additional observation and sampling of records of new or inexperienced assessors
- The learning sponsored by an organisation who meets the Employer Sponsor criteria, and commits to provide mentoring, development and RWE assessment of the unit.
- Where witnesses are used to sign off evidence, these must meet the appropriate scheme requirements.

## 7. Assessment Only Route

This route exists to enable those individuals considered sufficiently competent to move straight to assessment. Training organisations using this route to assessment for

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individuals will be an NSAP approved provider and will have assessors who have successfully been approved by NSAP for the purposes of assessment for the Power Skills scheme. See section 7 above for further details of assessor requirements.

## 8. Scheme Rules and Unit Groups

Units are derived from 4 unit groups – see below for details. There are no requirements to cover any number of specified units across any one or all of these groups. The learner can take as many or as few units as required from within each group or across groups to best fit their employer's and / or their own personal skills and knowledge development requirements.

The full list of unit groups is given below. The units associated with each group are detailed within the Technical Specification. The unit groups are derived from the current Power Network Craftsperson apprenticeship as follows:

### Group A - Foundation Schemes / Units

Schemes / units that offer the individual the pre-requisites for introduction to the power sector, and comprise broad, associated learning and skill. These may be existing achievements that can be demonstrated via accreditation of prior learning (APL).

### Group B - Generic Technical Skills Units

Schemes / units that offer the individual an introduction to the power sector, and comprise generic technical learning and skill.

### Group C - Specialist Technical Skills Units

Units that offer the individual detailed technical knowledge and skill across three power network craftsperson areas: Overhead Lines, Underground Cables and Substation Fitting.

### Group D - Generic Advanced Technical Skills Units

Units that offer the individual more complex power sector learning and skill development.

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## 9. Definitions

**'Provider'** means an organisation (or in some cases an individual) who is approved by NSAP to deliver training and / or undertake assessment of individuals.

**'Assessor'** means an individual recognised to assess the knowledge and / or competency of workers. They will have appropriate technical competence and / or experience in the subject they are assessing and will hold a nationally recognised assessor qualification.

**'Distribution Network Owner'** or **'DNO'** or **'Asset Owner'** means organisations who own and operate electricity distribution assets and infrastructure.

**'Electrical Network Service Providers'** or **'ENSP'** means organisations who are contracted with TSOs and DNOs and undertake work on their networks on their behalf.

**'Endorsement'** means the EUSR schemes or units that an individual has taken and is recorded against their EUSR registration.

**'Energy and Utility Skills'** is responsible for the quality assurance of assessment and training providers in relation to this scheme and all EUSR schemes.

**'Energy Networks Association'** or **'ENA'** is the voice of the networks, representing the 'wires and pipes' transmission and distribution network operators for gas and electricity in the UK and Ireland. Members of ENA control and maintain the national infrastructure that delivers these vital services into our homes and businesses.

**'EUSR'** means the register operated by Energy and Utility Skills Group, which holds records of an individual's training and qualifications, which individuals and employers can search to verify training and qualifications held by the individual.

**'EUSR Card'** issued to all individuals with a registration on EUSR; the forename and surname of the cardholder, their EUSR ID and their photograph is shown on the front of the card. The reverse of the card shows details of the registrations held by that individual at the time of card issue and the expiry date.

**'Grandfather Rights'** means the time-bound provision made for some experienced workers which means they do not have to adhere to the new rules for registration on this scheme – they are deemed to already have the required knowledge and competency. Their roles and experience will act as a proxy for the training and up-skilling that inexperienced or new workers will have to undertake. The claim for registration on this scheme via Grandfather Rights will be signed by the Nominating Officer within the respective employer.

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**'National Skills Academy for Power' or 'NSAP'** is part of Energy and Utility Skills Group and delivers initiatives, products and services identified as essential by member employers to the long-term benefit of the Power sector.

**'Nominating Officer'** means the individual within an employer authorised to confirm an individual's knowledge and / or skills against the agreed standards when an individual is claiming 'Grandfather Rights' as a route to registration on this scheme. A Nominating Officer must:

- be authorised accordingly in writing by the company they represent and recognised by that company as responsible for endorsing the competency of the persons they represent for registration on EUSR.
- have sound experience and knowledge of NSAP schemes, understand competency requirements of a craftsperson, and have a good understanding of industry good practice and associated legislation.
- be responsible for verifying the evidence provided to support the competence of a craftsperson, including DNO Authorisation, training and competency records.
- be suitably qualified with appropriate knowledge and experience of the operational aspects, safe working practices, provider safety procedures, legislations, and technical reference documents that are relevant to the scopes of work they are to assess in.
- have spent at least 3 years working (as a contractor) in an operational role for a DNO and/or TO.
- be currently employed (as a contractor) in an operational role for a DNO and/or TO.
- demonstrate that their participating organisation has appropriate internal quality assurance processes in place to ensure that the decisions made by the NO are sound and reliable (eg. standard internal processes, standardisation of decisions etc).

**'Office of Gas and Electricity Markets' or 'Ofgem'** is the non-ministerial government department and independent National Regulatory Authority that protects the interests of existing and future electricity and gas consumers.

**'Power networks'** means all or any part of a system that transmits and distributes electricity.

**'Transmission Operator' (TO) or Transmission System Operator' (TSO)** means an Ofgem regulated organisation that [transmits electrical power](#) from generation plants over the [electrical grid](#) to DNOs.

**'Work activities'** means those activities and tasks associated with a defined role.

**'Worker'** an individual who is employed or contracted within a DNO / TO or their supply chain and is registered, or seeks to be registered, on EUSR.

