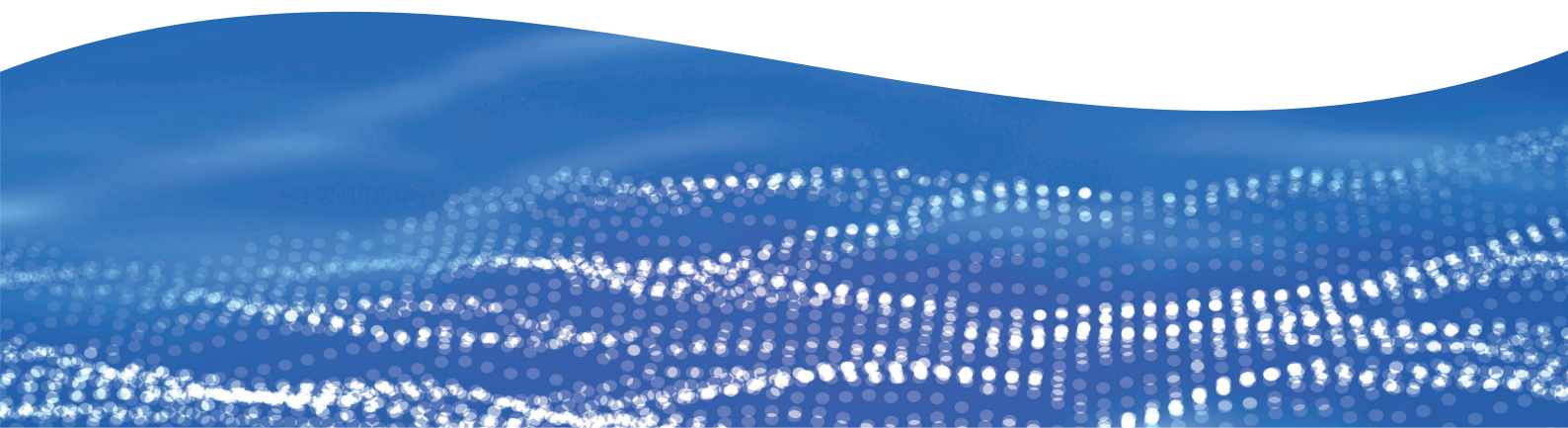




IMCA Assessment Procedure for Training Course Approval

**IMCA G010 – Rev. 0.5
September 2024**





The International Marine Contractors Association (IMCA) is the international trade association representing offshore marine contractors, service companies, and the industry's supply chain.

IMCA's mission is to improve performance in the marine contracting industry. Our value proposition is to influence our industry in key technical, contractual, policy and regulatory matters that are in the collective best interest of the marine contracting industry.

For over 25 years IMCA has maintained an important body of knowledge to assist our industry in the form of published guidance documents promoting good practice across a wide range of technical and professional disciplines. Documents have a self-explanatory title and are catalogued using a code containing letters and numbers. The letter indicates the discipline, and the number is simply sequential within that discipline.

Members are expected to adopt as a minimum standard the technical guidelines (published documents, information notes and other materials) produced by the Association appropriate to the technical division(s) and region(s) to which the relevant Member belongs.

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IMCA G010 – Rev. 0.5

Document designation: This document is categorised as **Governance**

Feedback – If you have any comments on this document, please email us:

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Version History

Date	Reason	Revision
September 2024	Updated 8 on suspension and withdrawal of approvals Updated 9.2 on online learning	0.5
May	Quality check – preface and layout updated; no change to content	0.4
May 2023	Updated section 7	0.3
February 2023	Updated section 10.4	0.2
December 2022	Updated list of course-specific documents in section 1	0.1
November 2022	Initial publication	



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1 Introduction

IMCA approves training courses for certain key positions in the marine energy industry. This document sets out a procedure for the assessment of applications for IMCA approval of such training courses. It supersedes all previous guidance on this subject.

A separate document is also provided for each training course for which approval is offered. Such documents contain course-specific approval requirements to supplement the course approval requirements set out in this document.

At time of publication, the following course-specific documents are available or planned:

- ◆ *IMCA D020 – Requirements for IMCA-approved Diver Medic Training courses*
- ◆ *IMCA D071 – Requirements for IMCA-approved Trainee Air Diving Supervisor courses*
- ◆ *IMCA D072 – Requirements for IMCA-approved Trainee Bell Diving Supervisor courses*
- ◆ *IMCA D073 – Requirements for IMCA-approved Assistant Life Support Technician courses*
- ◆ *IMCA D080 – Requirements for IMCA-approved Trainee Diving Systems Inspector courses*
- ◆ *IMCA R002 – Requirements for IMCA-approved ROV Introductory Training courses*

2 Eligibility

Training course approval is only available to IMCA members. Course-specific requirements may require that this be in a specific membership category. Training course approval may be suspended or withdrawn in the event of non-payment of membership fees or of resignation from membership.

Organisations may apply for training course approval whilst applying for IMCA membership, but neither will be granted until both are approved. Consideration of the membership application will be held at the desktop assessment stage until the training course assessment has been completed.

For more information on membership procedures, please visit www.imca-int.com/membership.

3 Scope of Approvals

Under this scheme, IMCA approval is offered for specified training courses only and does not extend to training providers and their services more widely.

Limitations on the approval may be defined at the time of approval or via a variation (see section 6). These might include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ **Format(s)** – Certain courses may be suitable for delivery wholly online, which will be specified in the relevant course-specific document. Others may require fully in-person delivery, or a hybrid of the two methods.
- ◆ **Location(s)** – With the exception of courses delivered wholly online, approvals will be for specific locations where facilities and equipment have been assessed by IMCA.
- ◆ **Provider** – An approval for multiple locations might include delivery of the course by another entity within the same company group. In such cases, the provider's name will be shown on the certificate and online listing.

Course approval is normally for a period of three years from the date of the final satisfactory assessment and is subject to the provider maintaining compliance with the requirements of this document and any relevant course-specific documents, including membership. Variations to approvals (see section 6) may be temporary in nature or included up to the expiry date of the current approval. Approval may be extended in accordance with the revalidation requirements set out in section 7. Approval may also be suspended or withdrawn as set out in section 8.

A directory of currently approved training courses will be maintained on the IMCA website, accessible via www.imca-int.com/trainingcourses.

Course approval certificates will be issued to eligible providers (subject to membership process completion) setting out details of the approval and any limitations that have been set. Where variations are approved, updated certificates will be issued (see section 6).

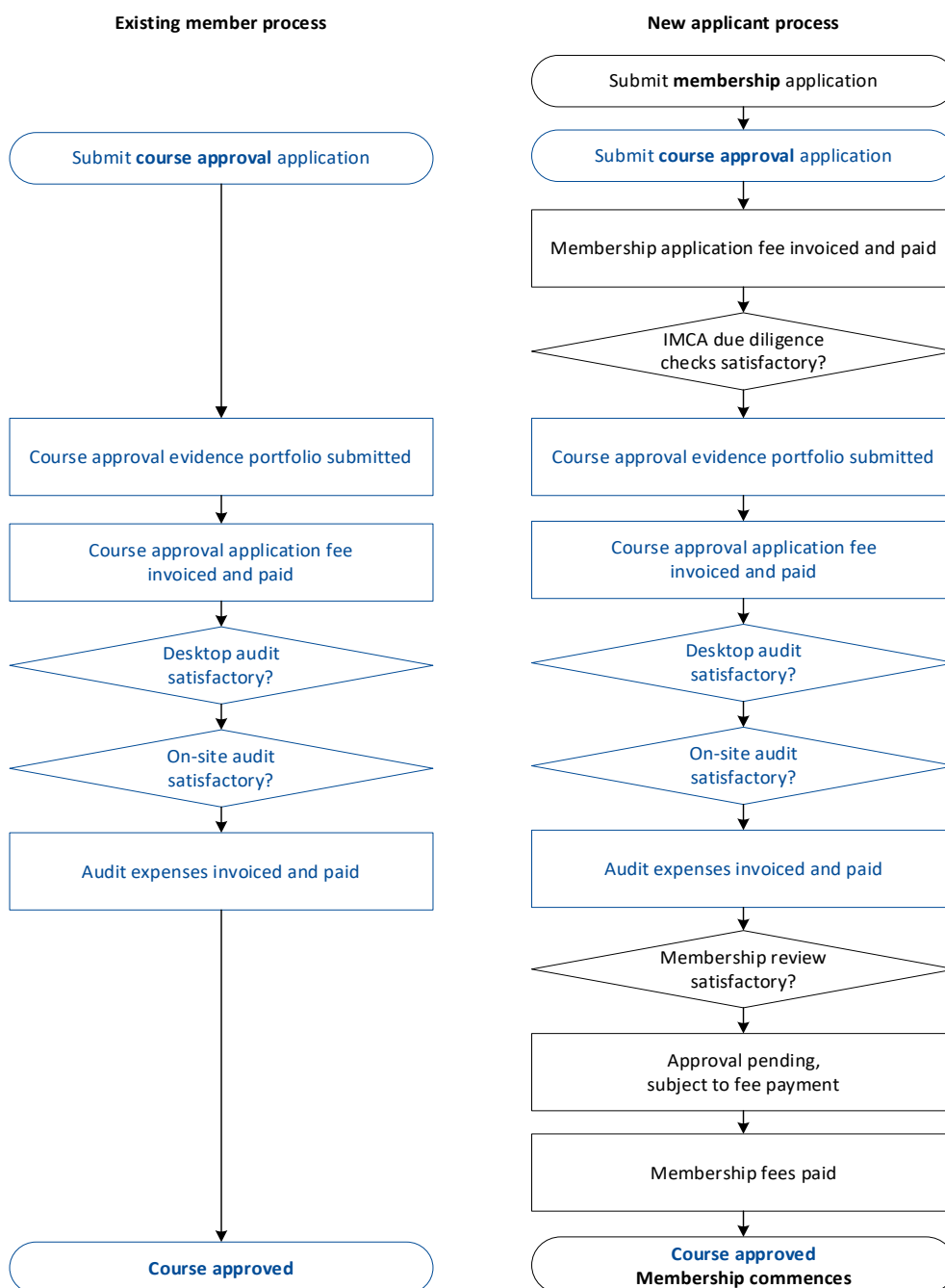
In the event that an approval is suspended or withdrawn, use of approval certificates and of related statements by providers must cease immediately, including removal from the provider's website, facilities and course documentation.

4 Application and Assessment Process

The basic application and assessment process for course approval is set out in the sub-sections below, supplemented by course-specific requirements detailed in the relevant document.

Fees are applicable for certain stages, as noted below. Current fee levels will be displayed in the scheme terms and conditions on the IMCA website at www.imca-int.com/legal-notice.

A full assessment of training course applications can be a somewhat complex process which will, on occasions, take an extended period of time to complete. IMCA will endeavour to ensure that course assessments are completed in an acceptable timeframe. Precise timescales will vary depending on the IMCA secretariat’s workload at the time that applications and fee payments are received. This is normally a period of two to three months, but IMCA will advise the applicant of expected response times as appropriate.



4.1 Initial Application

Training course approval is only available to IMCA members. Therefore, non-member organisations seeking approval of their training course(s) will also need to apply for IMCA membership at the same time as they apply for a training course approval (see section 2).

Organisations seeking approval of their training course(s) will be required to complete a form provided by IMCA, to accept the scheme terms and conditions, and to submit a portfolio of evidence as set out in the supplementary requirements for the course(s) for which approval is sought.

Payment of a non-refundable application fee and a standard due diligence review is required on the initial application for membership before any assessment of this submission can commence. This will be in addition to any membership application fee.

4.2 Desktop Assessment

The IMCA assessment team will undertake a review of the application form and evidence portfolio to assess its compliance with the requirements set out in this document and those in the relevant course-specific document.

The assessment team will advise the applicant of any deficiencies and request any necessary clarifications or additional evidence to be provided. Such feedback will set out areas for improvement but will be limited to evidence-based statements rather than guidance, as IMCA does not provide technical consultancy on course development.

Any follow-up information must be provided by the applicant within four weeks of IMCA's request. If this information is not provided within this period, the application will be marked as incomplete and may be rejected (see section 4.5).

As an outcome of the desktop assessment, the training provider may be accepted for remote and/or on-site assessment of a full course. This course will not be included in the IMCA website directory, and an approval certificate will not be issued at this stage. Trainees on this course must be advised that IMCA has agreed to the course being run, but that course completion certificates will only be recognised by IMCA if full approval of the course is subsequently granted.

4.3 Remote Assessment

A remote assessment via videoconference or online participation in a training course (in part or whole) may be required by the supplementary requirements for specific courses or may be deemed necessary by IMCA at any stage of the assessment.

4.4 Site Audit

A requirement for an on-site audit may be included in the course-specific guidance document or may be deemed necessary by IMCA.

Reimbursement of auditor travel, accommodation and related expenses is also required, which may be subject to an administration levy as set out in the scheme terms and conditions. Payment must be received before the application can proceed for final consideration (see section 4.5).

4.5 Outcome of Assessments

Once the desktop, remote and on-site assessment stages have been completed, as required, and once all required payments have been received by IMCA, the application will be considered for final approval.

If an application is successful, the course provider will be notified. If the provider is a new applicant for membership, they will proceed through the remainder of the membership application process. Only when this is completed and payment has been received for membership will the course provider be issued with an approval certificate and added to the IMCA approved training course directory.

If an application is not successful but is considered capable of addressing those aspects found to be inadequate during the assessments, IMCA will advise the applicant of these deficiencies and both how and when they must be addressed (this will normally be within four weeks of IMCA's notification to the applicant). Where a further remote or on-site assessment is deemed necessary, the application may be placed on hold until the next running of the course. Course completion certificates issued to trainees on the initial running of the course must not refer to IMCA. If the course is subsequently approved by IMCA, IMCA will advise whether updated course completion certificates may be issued or of any additional requirements that must be met by the provider and/or trainees before such updated certificates may be issued. While this course approval remains pending, any membership application will also remain on hold.

If an application is rejected outright, including if the application is rejected as incomplete (see section 4.2), no re-application for course approval will be accepted for a period of six months from the date on which the applicant was informed of their failure to meet the acceptance criteria. This period will allow sufficient time for the rejected applicant to prepare a new application, and will also allow IMCA to progress, in a timely manner, other applications from training providers who have focused on the quality and completeness of their application.

4.6 Appeals

If a training provider has concerns about any aspect of an assessment or regarding the approval or non-approval of its course(s), that provider should write directly to the point of appeal defined in the 'Oversight' section of each course-specific guidance document.

5 Course audits

5.1 IMCA Assessment Team

For each course approval application, the IMCA secretariat will identify an assessor or team of assessors as required. While ISO 45001 lead auditor certification is desirable, technical knowledge and experience relevant to the specific course being audited are of primary importance.

Course-specific guidance documents may identify specific requirements for assessor competence.

The assessor(s) must ensure (and be seen to ensure) that any audit is carried out in a fair and equitable fashion. Each audit for a particular type of course should be of approximately similar duration and cover the same specific areas, although there may be occasions where more time is needed and this will be at the assessor(s)'s discretion.

Before an audit the assessor(s) will brief the training provider on how they intend to conduct the audit and on any areas on which they specifically wish to concentrate. The assessor(s) will normally attend a representative selection of lectures and practical demonstrations. The assessor(s) will take the opportunity to discuss the course with both students and lecturers in an effort to establish whether IMCA requirements are being met.

The assessor(s) must ensure that the course being audited is run in accordance with IMCA requirements (as set out in the relevant course-specific document), which includes confirming that all topics are adequately covered by competent teaching staff and that all necessary equipment is provided in cases where practical experience is called for. In general, other criteria such as classroom facilities etc. need only be addressed where they are clearly inadequate (extremes of temperature, too noisy, etc.) and affect the way in which the course is being conducted.

At the end of any on-site audit, the assessor(s) will normally discuss their findings with the course director, providing an opportunity to discuss any identified shortcomings and how the training provider might address these.

5.2 Audit Templates and Checklists

IMCA will maintain standard templates and checklists for conducting course assessments, to ensure consistency in how the general and course-specific requirements are applied.

5.3 Additional Course Audits

IMCA reserves the right to undertake audits of approved courses at any time. These may be desktop, remote or on-site assessments. Where such audits are triggered by negative feedback on course provision, either from trainees, IMCA members or other stakeholders, training providers will be required to meet the cost of any re-auditing prior to a final assessment of re-approval being made.

6 Variation of Approvals

Providers of approved training courses must keep IMCA advised of any significant changes to approved courses, such as facilities, personnel, and course content. Providers must provide evidence that the course run with these variations, will be run to the same standard initially approved, including the course syllabus, facilities, training aids, and other course-specific requirements.

6.1 Minor Variations

Where a provider wishes to vary approval, it must apply to IMCA no later than 42 days prior to a proposed course taking place.

For the following variations, a separate assessment fee may be charged, which must be paid by the training provider before assessment by IMCA can commence:

- ◆ location/venue
- ◆ instructor(s)
- ◆ online/hybrid/in-person format.

6.2 Change in Provider Ownership

Course approval is non transferrable. Any change in ownership or control of the provider will require a new application for course approval, which will incur all relevant fees. Similarly, IMCA membership would be required, and so a separate membership application might be required.

7 Maintenance of Approval and Revalidation Requirements

As set out in section 3, Section 3, course approval is normally for a period of three years, subject to the provider maintaining the course elements as initially assessed, or gaining approval for any variations as set out in section 6.

Course providers will normally be invited to apply for revalidation of approval three months in advance of the three-year expiry.

A revalidation fee will be payable, which will be set out with the terms and conditions displayed on the IMCA website at www.imca-int.com/legal-notice. This may be incorporated into the annual membership fee.

The revalidation process will include submission of:

- ◆ a statement from the provider confirming that the course elements continue to be as previously assessed (including any variations previously accepted by IMCA, as set out in section 6)
- ◆ identification of any new variations that the provider wishes to be considered
- ◆ confirmation of how any changes to IMCA's course-specific guidance document have been reflected in the course content.

As set out in section 5.3, IMCA reserves the right to undertake audits of approved courses at any time. A full desktop, remote or on-site assessment may be required as part of the revalidation process. In such cases, training providers will be required to meet the cost of any re-auditing prior to a final assessment for revalidation of approval being made.

8 Suspension and Withdrawal of Approval

IMCA may suspend or withdraw approval at any time if either:

- the provider fails to maintain an appropriate level of quality in the delivery of IMCA-approved courses, or
- there is a significant change to the course, such as a loss of access to facilities, equipment or staff previously assessed, in which case approval may be suspended pending successful approval of a variation request (see section 6).

Withdrawal or suspension of approval may also affect the membership status of the provider.

9 Acceptance Criteria and Evidence Portfolio Requirements

Each course-specific guidance document sets out detailed requirements and guidance. The following elements are considered core to their structure, but additional elements can be included as needed.

9.1 Physical Facilities

General requirements include:

- ◆ availability of a health and safety assessment, including details on any protective measures for health screening and physical separation of candidates where required
- ◆ additional requirements for venues, facilities, any necessary equipment and class sizes are set out in each course-specific guidance document.

9.2 Online Training

Certain courses may be suitable for delivery using an online system. The course-specific requirements identify whether this is permitted for approved courses either for full courses or as part of a hybrid online/on-site course where practical experience is required.

9.2.1 Scheduled Instructor-led Training

Training providers must ensure verification of trainee identity (see 10.2). 100% attendance is required for all trainees, so they must be visible at all times with their camera switched on. It is recommended that monitoring be undertaken by other training provider staff, so as not to disturb or distract the instructor.

Virtual classrooms should be configured in essentially the same way as a physical classroom, with the instructor clearly visible via camera, presented content shared on screen, a high-definition camera feed used for any practical demonstrations plus the opportunity for trainees to interact via camera, microphone and online whiteboard or other shared content facilities.

Reliable, high-bandwidth connectivity must be ensured. Trainees should be provided in advance with instructions on the devices and connectivity they will require to participate in the training course. While training platforms should normally be platform-agnostic, trainees should be required to use an appropriate device with adequate display size, camera, and microphone. The ability for trainees to perform a system test in advance of the scheduled course is recommended.

Online support must be provided prior to, during and after each course session. This might include:

- ◆ a testing facility to ensure that trainees have appropriate means to connect to and participate in the online training course
- ◆ online chat with training provider staff before and during the course, to assist with any connectivity or software problems or to filter any trainee questions during presentation elements of the course
- ◆ the ability to discuss the training with the instructor(s), as would be possible in person during breaks or at the end of training sessions.

Online training limits natural face-to-face interaction, which can make it harder to identify trainees who might be struggling with aspects of the course. It should be assumed that all trainees might encounter difficulty at some stage, so sufficient support must always be available.

While online learning can enable participation by a larger number of trainees than might be the case in a physical venue, training providers must ensure that sufficient online support is available for the number of trainees in each session and that sufficient opportunities for interaction are available to all trainees. Training providers must consider any limitations introduced by language barriers involving trainees from multiple locations.

Regular and sufficient breaks must be included in the course schedule (as with in-person courses) to allow trainees to rest their eyes and move from a seated posture.

9.2.2 On-demand Learning

On-demand learning may be considered for approval, with this option described in the course-specific guidance document where relevant. Where such approval is offered, course providers must:

- ◆ Ensure that trainee identities are verified when subscribing to a course and again when commencing a course completion assessment.
- ◆ Monitor time spent on and engagement with the course material, such as ensuring software windows are active for a minimum period before recording completion and restricting the fast-forwarding or skipping of video content.
- ◆ Undertake remote invigilation/monitoring of the course completion assessment.
- ◆ Offer a facility to discuss the course content with a qualified instructor, such as a booking system for video calls and/or online chat.

Evidence of the above must be included in the applicant's submission for approval (or variation to an existing approval).

9.2.3 Online Assessment

Course-specific guidance documents may require trainees to successfully complete an examination to demonstrate their comprehension of the course content. Where such courses are delivered online, training providers must ensure that they have sufficient measures in place to ensure that cheating cannot take place and that the security of the examination is not compromised.

Expected measures include:

- ◆ Use of a secured examination platform or monitoring of the trainee's device to avoid the possibility of a third party assisting via remote device control or of the trainee recording the examination content.
- ◆ Inspection of each trainee's environment to ensure that it is clear of any inappropriate materials, that the trainee is alone, and that audio is via speakers, to avoid the possibility of a third party assisting via a headset or earpiece.

- ◆ Monitoring of trainees for the duration of the examination. Training providers must have sufficient personnel to adequately monitor the number of individuals taking the examination concurrently.
- ◆ Trainees should not speak during the exam, other than to communicate with the training provider in case of a system fault and should not have access to any other devices.

9.2.4 Evidence Portfolio for Applications for Approval of Online Training

For approved courses where delivery wholly or partially online is available, the following minimum documentation is required from applicants:

- ◆ details on the proposed method of online delivery
- ◆ details on the equipment and facilities to be used by the course instructor(s)
- ◆ a description of the support available to trainees during and following the course
- ◆ the identity/prerequisite verification process followed by the training provider
- ◆ details on the proposed assessment and invigilation platform.

The above items, together with any additional documentation required for a particular course, are set out in each course-specific guidance document.

9.3 Syllabus

The required syllabus is set out in each course-specific guidance document.

9.4 Course Duration

The course-specific guidance document will set out minimum durations for courses overall and for specific elements of the syllabus as appropriate. Training providers are expected to implement courses and sessions at or above these durations to reflect their own course content, delivery method and student ability, to ensure that course objectives are met in full.

9.5 Instructors

Requirements for instructor experience, certification and competency are set out in the course-specific guidance.

IMCA does not offer certification of instructors but may maintain an internal register of those instructors whose details have been accepted as part of an approved evidence portfolio to assist in assessment of future applications. This register will not be published, and instructors must not claim to be IMCA-approved.

10 Trainees

10.1 Entry Level Requirements

Each course-specific document sets out previous training and/or experience required to attend an IMCA-approved course.

Providers are free to accept other individuals onto course sessions but must not promote the course to them as IMCA-approved and must not refer to IMCA on any course completion certificate or other materials.

10.2 Verification of Trainee Identity

The training provider is responsible for ensuring that trainee records, including certificates, are complete and accurate. Trainee names should be recorded in their full legal form. These details must be verified by the training provider against photographic evidence such as a valid passport, driver's licence or national identity card.

Any prerequisite qualifications, logbook records or other documentation set out in the eligibility section of the course-specific guidance document must also be verified prior to acceptance onto an approved course.

Such evidence may be submitted in advance for external verification but must also be presented on arrival at a physical venue or via webcam during an online training session.

10.3 Assessment and Certification

The course-specific guidance document defines how trainees are assessed as satisfactorily completing the course, such as through a multiple-choice examination.

While a course is approved, or for those attending an audited course which is subsequently approved, trainees who meet these requirements may be issued with a course completion certificate. A template course completion certificate may be provided in the course-specific guidance document.

Course completion certificates must not refer to IMCA while an application for approval is still being assessed, nor while approval has been suspended or withdrawn. Course completion certificates must not refer to IMCA for any trainees who do not meet the entry requirements set out in the course-specific guidance document.

10.4 Submission of Trainee Data to IMCA

Training providers are required to submit certain data to IMCA on all individuals who have successfully completed an approved training course. This data will include the full name and current email address of the trainee, plus other details required to confirm identity and validity of the trainee's record.

This data must be submitted using the template or format specified by IMCA. Such data is held by IMCA for the purpose of maintaining a central verification system for training records.

Trainee data must be submitted within five working days of the final day of each course. Employers, clients and other interested parties will be seeking to verify certificates online

while trainees may be seeking access to additional IMCA services, so it is imperative that this data is available within the IMCA system in a timely manner.

11 Feedback and Complaints Process

The provider must inform students of the IMCA approval of the course and of their right to complain directly to IMCA if they have any concerns regarding the course.

IMCA shall invite each trainee to complete an online questionnaire seeking comments about all aspects of the course and tuition received. A summary of the responses will be issued to the provider by IMCA. The provider should use the responses as a basis for future improvements and should maintain records of any actions taken in response to the trainees' feedback for a period of three years.

The standard IMCA complaints procedure, referred to in the scheme terms and conditions, is also available where required.