

ECS ANNUAL REVIEW 2024

ECS is the competence and identification card scheme for electrotechnical operatives developed and agreed by industry. The ECS scheme in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, is administered by the  The Electrotechnical JIB
Setting employment standards

STANDARDS AND STRATEGY

The ECS Steering Committee plays a key role in setting the strategic direction of the scheme and helps uphold competence, safety and professionalism in the industry. It ensures that apprenticeships, vocational and other qualification routes are mapped to relevant competence frameworks or National Occupational Standards.

Bringing together leading industry bodies – including ECA, SELECT, Unite the Union, IET, Electrical Safety First, SSAIB, and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) – the committee ensures that ECS card requirements reflect real-world skills, knowledge, experience, and behaviours. It also oversees key requirements such as health, safety, and environmental awareness, CPD, and revalidation.

In 2024 we were delighted to welcome Mussa Awaleh, Senior Policy Advisor at the Buildings Safety Regulator, within the HSE.

Looking ahead, the committee remains focused on enhancing safety, promoting competence-based training and assessment and supporting skilled professionals. Our work ensures that ECS cardholders are recognised as highly competent individuals who meet the highest standards in the industry.

Find out more about how ECS card requirements are set by [industry here](#).

A YEAR OF ENGAGEMENT

Andy Reakes, Chief Operating Officer at the JIB and ECS, presented at all six Elex Shows throughout 2024. The ECS team were on hand each day at the JIB and ECS stand to help with any queries.

Andy said: "This year it was really encouraging to see so many people interested in new routes to ECS cards – such as the Experienced Worker Assessments. We also saw an increase in interest and enquiries about evidencing the competency of the workforce with ECS Check, which is a positive sign for delivery of high standards and safety."

In February 2024, alongside the Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board

(SSAIB), we took the opportunity to engage with cardholders and the wider industry at Fire & Security Matters, in Coventry. We followed this up with the Fire and Security Event, held in Birmingham in May.

ECS also supported the launch of the Cellular Network Field Engineer apprenticeship standard at Vodafone HQ and hosted a number of webinars with ECA, CompTIA, the British Computer Society and ECS Industry Groups.

We look forward to continuing to promote the benefits of ECS in 2025.

ECS STEERING GROUP



180,000 ECS CARDS 

ECS supports more than 180,000 valid cardholders across the built environment sector, reinforcing its position as a key competency standard. As part of the CSCS Alliance, ECS works alongside other schemes to improve card-checking procedures. ECS cardholders can now also use the CSCS Smart Check app to present cards virtually (more on p4).

12 TRADE SHOWS IN 6 CITIES

In 2024, 500 people attended live events to hear updates and guidance on ECS. In 2025 we will be attending:

Elex Show

Bolton 6–7 March
London 27–28 March
Exeter 24–25 April 2024
Harrogate 15–16 May
Coventry 11–12 September
Sandown Park 6–7 November

Smart Buildings Show

London 15–16 October

COMPETENCE AND SAFETY



SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE INDUSTRY

ECS has been working for several years with Industry Working Groups to develop occupational frameworks. The aim is to bring consistency and clarity to competency standards and, more recently, to ensure alignment with Building Safety Regulations.

Competence frameworks developed by one such group – previously known as Working Group 2: Installers and now named Sector Lead Group 10 (SLG 10) – have been completed in Fire and Security, Network Infrastructure Installation, Cabling and Jointing and Building Controls occupations.

The work of the ECS Industry Groups continues with an overarching framework for the Audiovisual and Creative Industries now approved. This includes the introduction of 8 new ECS cards.

The hundreds of organisations associated with these industry groups are now developing CPD and revalidation options as well as devising Experienced Worker Assessments (EWA) routes to reach baseline competency – see page 3.

Andy Reakes explained: The work of the ECS Industry Groups over the past decade has put the electrotechnical sector in a strong position in terms of setting out the industry approved routes to baseline competency and detailing options for continuing professional development and revalidation. It is for this reason JIB has been trusted to lead the electrotechnical function for SLG 10 and continues to work to improve standards across the wider sector."

To find out more about the occupational frameworks and requirements for each occupation under ECS, take a look at the [card types here](#).

78,000 GOLD CARDS

There are over 78,000 ECS Gold Card holders across all occupations in the UK and more than 50,000 are registered electricians.

An ECS Gold Card signifies that an Installation or Maintenance Electrician has met the industry-approved Level 3 standard. It also demonstrates that they:

- Stay up to date with the latest BS 7671 IET Wiring Regulations
- Adhere to a Code of Professional Conduct
- Commit to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Revalidation

For clients and employers, this means confidence in hiring professionals with verified skills, knowledge, and ongoing commitment to industry standards.

LEADING ON SAFETY STANDARDS

A minimum awareness level of fire safety in buildings is a key recommendation from the post-Grenfell review conducted by the Competence Steering Group and led by Dame Judith Hackitt. This includes an understanding of compartmentation and the interdependency of different trades on fire stopping.

ECS has mandated up-to-date Health, Safety, and Environmental (HS&E) awareness as part of its card scheme requirements since 2001. The JIB Survey of Accidents at Work shows this has contributed to a reduction of more than 90% in deaths and accidents on construction sites and related projects.



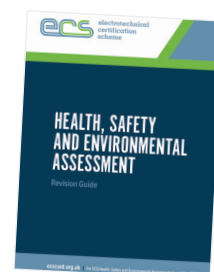
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The ECS HS&E Assessment already covered much of the recommended content and was updated in May 2024 to include those additional topics required to align with the new standards on fire safety.

As the first CSCS Alliance scheme to meet the requirements of this enhanced regime, ECS once again leads the way in raising competence in the built environment industry.

An updated ECS Health, Safety and Environmental Assessment Revision Guide is available to help candidates prepare for the test.

[Find out more here.](#)



EXPERIENCED WORKER ASSESSMENTS



ECS has been working to develop electrotechnical Experienced Worker Assessments (EWAs) to provide routes to gain qualified status and a gold card. This option recognises those who have been carrying out work to the nationally recognised standard but have never undertaken an apprenticeship. It provides a time and cost effective way of assessing these people to this industry standard, which avoids the need for them to go back to college or to undertake formal training routes.

Two EWA options for Fire, Emergency and Security Systems (FESS) were launched in 2023 and early 2024, with centres opening around the UK to support the increasing demand to evidence competence via ECS.

In 2024 ECS worked alongside Group Horizon and the Building Controls Industry Association (BCIA) to deliver the BEMS Controls Engineer EWA which was launched in May, and again is seeing positive feedback and increased demand.

A further EWA route for Network Infrastructure Installation was developed with Open Awards and launched in September, to provide a way for experienced network infrastructure professionals to be assessed against the Network Infrastructure Level 3 standard.

In September 2024 the EAL Level 3 Panel Wiring for Engineering Applications route was approved as a pathway to obtaining the Panel Builder Gold Card, recognising experienced workers in Specialist Control and Distribution Panel Manufacture and Installation.

[Find out more about EWA here.](#)



EVIDENCING STANDARDS AND SKILLS

The increased specification for smart building integration brings with it the necessity for non-electrically qualified, software professionals to attend construction sites.

ECS has launched a card for KNX Integrators to overcome challenges around site access for this group. Eligibility for this card requires KNX certification and membership of KNX UK to demonstrate competency and professionalism.

Iain Gordon, Chair of KNX UK said: "This collaboration acknowledges the skillset of KNX Certified Integrators as an entirely separate and specialised category."

ECS also launched a Signal Distribution Specialist card for professionals holding the CAI (Confederation of Aerial Industries) Foundation Diploma in Signal Reception for Aerial and Satellite specialists. This recognises the need for a dedicated certification pathways, to acknowledge the unique qualifications and competencies of those working in the signal distribution sector. Applicants need to provide evidence of their CAI Diploma or equivalent, and may be required to undergo additional health, safety, and environmental assessment to demonstrate their competency at the required level.



SUPPORTING PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Competence requirements for sector groups - including Fire & Security, Network Infrastructure, and LV Cabling and Jointing - are set to be introduced, from 2026 onwards. On renewal, skilled cardholders will be required to evidence approved Continuing Professional Development (CPD) or complete a technical assessment on relevant regulations or standards. There will be a number of approved ways to meet CPD requirements by updating knowledge and skills.

Evidence of this learning can be recorded through MyECS.

[Find out more here.](#)



MILESTONE REACHED OF 65,000 REMOTE ASSESSMENTS

In 2024, ECS reached a major milestone, with more than 65,000 assessments completed via Remote Invigilation. This highlights the growing demand for this convenient, time-saving option. Originally launched in 2021 to deliver ECS Health, Safety, and Environmental (HSE) assessments during the Covid-19 pandemic, the system has since expanded to offer a wide range of technical assessments, such as Fire and Security, Network Infrastructure, Electrical Safety, and Building Controls.

AI-powered software verifies candidate identities and monitors performance throughout the exam, ensuring a robust and reliable invigilation process. Ongoing upgrades continue to enhance the user experience, with improved functionality, support and guidance.

Today, around 75% of all assessments are conducted remotely, either through MyECS or organised directly by employers.

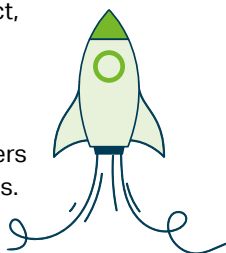
[Learn more here](#)

INTRODUCING DIGITAL IDENTITY VERIFICATION

In collaboration with industry-leading vetting service Experian, ECS is pleased to introduce Identity Document Verification Technology (IDVT), a game-changing upgrade to the ECS Card application process. New applicants have the option to use IDVT to verify their identity, uploading a photo of their ID document and a photo of themselves (a selfie taken with a phone). This eliminates the need for paper forms and photo endorsements, reduces environmental impact, increases security and makes the process faster and easier.

We encourage all new applicants to take advantage of this technology but the current photo endorsement process will remain available for those who prefer it. Later in 2025, employers will also be able to use IDVT to verify their employees' identities.

[Find out more here](#)



✓ CSCS SMART CHECK

CSCS Smart Check provides employers, main contractors and site managers with an immediate, clear and secure way of ensuring all professions have a valid and in date card which evidences they are qualified and competent.

Since 2015, 38 card schemes operating in construction and the Built Environment have committed to the Construction Leadership Council's (CLC's) recommendations and display the CSCS logo. ECS cards have been enabled as smart cards since 2017 and from 31 March 2025 all 2.1 million cards in CSCS will also use smart technology, eliminating the need to manually enter data.

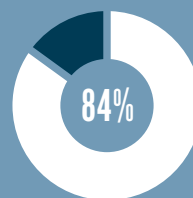
With the Smart Check app, employers and site managers can easily validate the status of ECS cardholders, ensuring that only fully qualified professionals are on site.

[Discover more here](#)



25 NEW DIGITAL INITIATIVES

As part of our ongoing commitment to excellence, ECS continues to invest in digital innovations which bring greater oversight and rigour to the certification and verification process. In 2025, we will be rolling out 25 new digital initiatives, designed to improve efficiency and security. From enhanced identity verification to improved data management, these innovations will advance safety and compliance, streamline workflows, enhance accuracy, and ensure that we maintain the highest standards in all areas. Check our [website](#) for updates.



84% OF ENQUIRIES RESOLVED AT FIRST CONTACT

In 2024, the ECS Customer Experience Centre resolved 84% of queries immediately on receiving the request. This exceptionally high score, for enquiries resolved at first contact, reflects the specialist knowledge within the team and the investment undertaken to simplify and automate processes. Applying for or renewing ECS cards is more straightforward, it has become more convenient to complete required assessments and there is clear guidance and expert help available.