

This newsletter is aimed at all personnel registered on the MCERTS Personnel Competency scheme. It is intended to keep you up-to-date with scheme developments, summarise exam results, provide guidance on some technical aspects and help with future examinations. If you have any comments, suggestions or topics you would like to see included in future editions, please let us know. Send your comments to mcerts@siraenvironmental.com.

Certification statistics

There are currently 972 personnel registered on the scheme and 500 certificates have been issued since 2002. Certified personnel are made up as follows:

Level 1	205	Level 2	295
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Recertification exam results

160 recertification papers have been taken since October 2007. The success rate is currently 89%.

Appeals against exam results and exam feedback

If you believe an examination result is incorrect you can ask for it to be reconsidered under the Appeals Process. Also, under some circumstances you can receive feedback on your exam performance. Further details can be found at

www.sira.co.uk/mcerts_personnel_forms.html

No feedback can be provided for multiple-choice examinations.

2009 examination schedule

The examinations schedule for 2009 has been finalised and can be found at www.sira.co.uk/mcerts/examdates.mht. Two new venues (Dublin and Leeds) have been added to the schedule.

Sira contact details

Please contact Pat Blazdell with any queries about the MCERTS Personnel Competence Scheme.

Contact Pat at pat.blazdell@sira.co.uk
Tel : 01322 520503

Recent exam results

Of the examinations carried out throughout 2008 the average success rate for the various papers is as follows:

Level 1 m/c	63%	Level 1 narr	76%
Level 2 oral	46%		
TE1 m/c	87%	TE1 narr	48%
TE2 m/c	56%	TE2 narr	68%
TE3 m/c	59%	TE3 narr	88%
TE4 m/c	33%	TE4 narr	69%

New Certificate expiry dates for 2009

Level 1, Level 2, technical endorsements and the hazard identification & risk assessment course are all valid for 5 years from the date of issue. All new certificates issued after January 2009 will show expiry dates for all these individually. This means that if you have not attended the hazard identification & risk assessment course in the past five years, your MCERTS certificate and I/D card will expire.

The MCERTS Personnel Competency Standard has been amended to clarify this. Version 6.2 of the standard was published in December 2008.

Exam board meetings, 2009

Exam board meetings are scheduled for 19 March, 22 May, 8 September and 3 December 2009. Exam results will be notified to candidates shortly after each exam board meeting. Please remember that exam results will NOT be given out over the telephone.

TE1 now includes oxygen monitoring

The examination syllabus has been amended to include principles of oxygen monitoring. Version 5.1 of the syllabus was published in December 2008.

MCERTS exam marking

The process of marking examinations is taken very seriously and stringent controls are in place to ensure the process is impartial and fair for all candidates.

multiple-choice exam papers – contain 40 questions. The pass mark is 28/40 (70%). All papers are marked twice. If the mark is borderline, a third marking is undertaken. Once all the papers are marked, Sira prepares a detailed set of statistics which show the success rate for each question. The MCERTS examination board reviews the data at their quarterly exam board meetings. If a significant number of candidates fail a particular question, that question is scrutinised by the exam board. Occasionally, a question is removed from the marking scheme and the pass mark amended accordingly.

narrative exam papers – contain 3 or 4 questions. The pass mark is 26/40 (65%). Papers are sent to an independent examiner for marking. Each paper has an agreed marking scheme. The examiner must comply with the marking scheme. If there is a borderline case, the examiner will often refer the matter to the quarterly exam board meeting. The paper will be checked again at the exam board meeting by another examiner.

level 2 interviews – are conducted by two examiners, one of which is present at all interviews to provide consistency. The other is drawn from a panel of examiners provided by the Environment Agency. Each examiner makes detailed notes during the interview. The notes are reviewed at the conclusion of the interview and a decision is reached regarding the suitability of the candidate. If a candidate is not successful, a detailed summary is prepared which can be fed back to the candidate if required.

recertification exam papers – contain 20 multiple-choice questions (worth one mark each) and 2 narrative questions (worth 10 marks each). The pass mark is 28/40 (65%). The multiple-choice section is sent to Sira for marking and the narrative section is marked by an independent examiner to an agreed marking scheme. The two marks are added together to make the total mark. Once all the papers are marked, Sira prepares a detailed set of statistics which show the success rate for each question. The MCERTS examination board reviews the data at their quarterly exam board meetings. If a significant number of candidates fail a particular question, that question is scrutinised by the exam board. Occasionally, a question is removed from the marking scheme and the pass mark amended accordingly.

Accredited personnel certification

Sira maintains accreditation for all our certification activities. In much the same way that stack emission monitoring laboratories are audited against ISO/IEC 17025, Sira is audited against ISO/IEC 17024, the international standard for certification bodies providing personnel certification. The UKAS accreditation logo appears on all certificates issued to certified persons, providing assurance and confidence in the scheme.



All certificates issued by Sira carry the UKAS accreditation logo (Shown above).