

Security Testing Exam Standard Further Information

Why are you making this change?

At the end of 2023, the UK Cyber Security Council formally announced the opening of the sector's first professional Chartership titles.

This was the culmination of a series of pilots that helped the Council define and refine their standards and processes to enable practitioners in Security Architecture, Risk, Audit and Security Testing, to be recognised on the Council's Register of professionals, as well as gain 'Chartered Cyber Security Professional' status.

The UK Cyber Security Council is taking over the Exam Standard from NCSC, to align with the Council Standards and NCSC will recognise the Professional Registration titles for the CHECK scheme. The current licensed bodies - [CREST](#) and [The Cyber Scheme](#) (TCS) - will be responsible for conducting professional registration assessments and awarding professional titles in the Security Testing specialism.

As a result of a series of pilots covering the security testing specialism, NCSC has mapped an equivalence between the exam certifications currently recognised. Therefore, CHECK Team Leaders can be assessed either at Principal Cyber Security Professional or Chartered Cyber Security Professional registration titles.

By 31 March 2025, all CHECK Team Leaders must have achieved a UK Cyber Security Council Security Testing Title at the 'Principal' level or higher.

Is it mandatory for CHECK TLs to acquire the relevant Security Testing Chartered Title?

It is mandatory for CHECK TLs to achieve one of the professional titles, Principal or Chartered.

By 31 March 2025, all current CHECK Team Leaders will need to hold a Professional Registration Title from one of the Licensed Bodies approved by Council for the Security Testing specialism. The 'NCSC-approved' exam will no longer be sufficient: instead, NCSC will recognise one of the relevant Council Professional Registration Titles in the Security Testing specialism. All CHECK Team Leaders will need to have undertaken and passed Part A (technical) and Parts B-E (soft skills) in Security Testing, to the minimum level of Principal.

Tell me more about the process

This application process will require you to submit an application form and undertake a mandatory exam (Part A, unless this is already passed and remains valid). It is then followed, depending on the license body chosen, by either a peer-review interview or a written independent attestation, most likely from your employer. You choose which license body through whom to make your application, regardless of which organisation you took your examination with.

The process will be to apply to one of the Licensed Bodies for security testing to achieve a Professional Registration Title. The registration process will cover the technical examination (competence A) and an additional skills assessment (competences B-E). The registration process is a peer assessment against the UK Cyber Security Council Standard of Professional Competence and Commitment (UK SPCC).

Next, the process will follow a mandatory examination and the option of either peer-based interview (process A) or a non-mandatory interview route (process B). The option is dependent on the Licensed Body and registration title in question.

The final stage is a full assessment of the outcome of the examination, outcome of the documentary review and, if applicable, outcome of the interview resulting in a decision regarding the award of a professional registration title.

Why can Team Leaders gain a professional title at the level of Principal OR Chartered?

New or recently-qualified CTLs (with less than three years' experience) generally map to the Principal title. More experienced CTLs tend to map to Chartered title, particularly when they have more than five years' experience.

When do CTLs need to apply for a Principal or Chartered Title in Security Testing?

You have between **1 July and 30 September 2024** to get your application in, if you would like to receive funding to cover your application for Parts B-E. You will only be funded if you apply (and are successful on your first attempt). Applications outside of this timeframe will not receive financial support through the Council, nor will second attempts be funded. **Your professional title will need to have been awarded by 31 March 2025.**

What must I do if my exam expires before the end of March 2025?

You must re-sit and pass your exam as usual before the expiry date. You must achieve professional registration at Principal or Chartered title **by 31 March 2025**. The Council will not cover the examination fees (for Part A).

What must I do if my exam expires on or after 1 April 2025?

You must achieve professional registration at the Principal level or higher **by 31 March 2025**. The Council will not cover the examination fees (for Part A).

Who is offering funding and how do I access it?

Funding is available through the Council to cover the cost of obtaining professional registration if (and only if) CHECK Team Leaders submit their application to a Licensed Body **by 30 September 2024**.

You must apply via one of the licenced bodies and the funding will be arranged between them and the Council. There is no cost to the individual for the application fee.

How are applications processed?

In order to process applications, the names of all eligible CTLs will need to be forwarded to the Council. If, for any reason, you do not wish to share your name with the Council, you **MUST** notify the NCSC CHECK Scheme (CHECK@ncsc.gov.uk) **by 21 June 2024**. However, withdrawing your consent means that the Council will be unable to fund your professional registration.

What happens if I don't obtain a Council Title?

Any CHECK Team Leader who has not successfully obtained their Council Title at the minimum of Principal **by 31 March 2025** will no longer be eligible to operate in the CHECK Scheme.

Will I need to resit my technical exam, if it has already passed and remains valid, in order to apply for a professional title?

No. If your technical exam is passed and current, you will only need to undertake Parts B-E.

What if I believe myself to have exceptional circumstances preventing me from gaining a title in time?

If you believe there are exceptional circumstances preventing you from meeting these deadlines, please contact the NCSC CHECK team at check@ncsc.gov.uk.

Do I have to take the assessment with the same licenced body I took the technical exam with?

No, you can choose which Licensed Body you apply to for the professional title. Each licensed body recognises the other qualifications and examinations.

PLEASE NOTE: New company applications to the CHECK Scheme remain closed and will remain so until further notice.