

# The Society for Radiological Protection



## Refresher Course 1a

**SRP Annual Conference, Southport,  
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**RPA Re-Certification - improving  
your chance of success**

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## Scope

### Part 1

- Background
- The Process
- General requirements
- What assessors want or do not want to see in a re-certification portfolio!
- Making life simple for the assessor
- Good or bad portfolio evidence

### Part 2

- General Q&A Session

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## Background

- HSE Statement (Oct 2006) - any individual wishing to act as RPA under IRR99 must either:
  - hold a valid certificate from an assessing body recognised by HSE; or
  - hold a National Vocational Qualification or Scottish Vocational Qualification (N/SVQ) at level 4 in Radiation Protection Practice (< five years previously)
- A certificate is valid for five years.
- To renew suitable evidence required to demonstrate the applicant has kept up to date their knowledge of radiation protection legislation and developments in radiation protection practice.
- Suitable evidence may include:
  - work examples,
  - the application of IRR99,
  - reading relevant scientific or other journals,
  - taking part in appropriate discussion groups and private study,
  - attendance at courses, RPA update meetings, scientific seminars etc.

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## RPA 2000 Advice

- Renew via 'RPA 2000 Renewal of Certification Scheme (RCS)'.
- However, individuals can repeat the full initial certification process by submitting a new portfolio of evidence, following exactly the same process as their first certification.

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## Overview of the Renewal of Certification Scheme (RCS)

- The RCS has been designed to be similar in principle to a CPD scheme
- The points gained are generally also applicable to a CPD scheme
- This aims to assist applicants as many members need to participate in both RCS and CPD Schemes

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## Participation in the RCS

- RCS broadly involves identifying work, update and training activities that positively demonstrate that the applicant has maintained:
  - a clear understanding of the RPA role, i.e. to advise employers on IRR99 compliance;
  - detailed understanding of IRR99 and any amendments to it, either direct or via other legislation;
  - general awareness of other related legislative developments (e.g. REPIR and transport legislation);
  - general awareness of technological advances relevant to radiation protection practice.
- RCS particularly emphasises the practical experience of RPA work, keeping up-to-date with relevant legislation preferably through regular participation in RPA update events.
- RCS involves maintaining a record of qualifying work activities and the corresponding points gained over a five-year period.

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## Evidence

- As RPA recertification is a formal legal requirement, the individual seeking renewal must support with evidence any points they claim.
- The intention is to minimise the effort required to gain renewal. Suitable evidence is discussed later but in general may include:
  - Training course programmes, with the applicant's participation simply highlighted (e.g. as a student, lecturer or organiser) and, preferably, an attendance certificate.
  - Short, simple extracts from reports, documents, etc, identifying the applicant's role.
  - Brief descriptions of one-off activities, with a brief justification for the points claimed (preferably by means of a direct comparison with the identified work activities).

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## Appropriate work activities

- The identified work activities are separated into two categories:
  - **Category 1 : Learning based activities**
  - **Category 2 : Competence based activities**
- Applicants may include any other work activities that they regard as being relevant



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## Qualifying Points

- To achieve recertification at least 100 appropriate RCS points are required; not more than 75 points can be gained from Category 2 (Competence based activities).
- Applicants are strongly advised to:
  - Submit evidence for greater than the minimum 100 points required (125 points is advised)
  - Be selective looking for quality over quantity. Supplying good evidence for >150 points (i.e. well over the advised 125) enables Assessors to award renewal without further reference to the applicant, even if some of the points claimed are in question. It also avoids assessors having to evaluate too much extraneous material.
  - Only points gained within the five-year duration of participation in the RCS can count towards renewal of certification. Surplus points cannot be carried forward to the next renewal.

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## Period of participation in RCS

- To ensure your continued certification, renewal applications must be received by RPA 2000 no later than 3 months prior to the expiry of the current certificate.
- This should give adequate time for RPA 2000 to assess the application and either issue a new certificate or take up any necessary enquiries with the applicant.
- Apply for recertification ~ 6 months prior to certificate expiring
- RPA 2000 has powers to extend the validity of current certificates but only if completion of an assessment is delayed because of administrative delays within RPA 2000.

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## Learning Based Activities

- Category 1.1 Attendance at RPA-Update sessions (e.g. those organised by AURPO, BNFL, IPEM, NRPB and SRP).
- Category 1.2 Attendance at conferences, courses and workshops related specifically to new or revised legislation of direct relevance to RPA work.
- Category 1.3 Private study and active participation in distance learning packages or internet discussion groups. (e.g. study of the HSE publication 'Radiation Protection News')
- Category 1.4 Attendance at formal radiation protection conferences, courses and workshops with content, or some content, related specifically to technological advances in operational radiation protection practice.
- Category 1.5 Other learning based activities.

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## Competence Based Activities (1)

- Category 2.1 Providing advice to the radiation employer on the requirements of IRR99.
- Category 2.2 Providing advice on the requirements of IRR99 to persons other than the radiation employer.
- Category 2.3 Interaction with regulators (e.g. on behalf of the radiation employer).
- Category 2.4 Providing advice on the content of a Radiological Risk Assessment. (This may include making the risk assessment, which is strictly beyond the RPA's role).
- Category 2.5 Authorship and/or presentation of a paper relating to: the content/implications of IRR99; an RPA's functions under IRR99; other legislative matters related to IRR99.

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## Competence Based Activities (2)

- Category 2.6 Authorship and/or presentation of a paper relating to technological advances in radiation protection.
- Category 2.7 Lecturing on: the content/implications of IRR99; - an RPA's functions under IRR99; - other legislative matters related to IRR99.
- Category 2.8 Lecturing on technological advances in radiation protection.
- Category 2.9 Routine Radiological Protection Advice as an RPA .
- Category 2.10 Routine Radiological Protection Advice to other RPAs.
- Category 2.11 Other competence based activities

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**Do Not...**

- Provide too much evidence
- Submit evidence which has clearly been written to satisfy a portfolio
- Over inflate the value of the advice provided
- Make statements of advice provided without any evidence to substantiate the claims

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## Do...

- Be selective in the evidence you submit
- Maximise your evidence options e.g. private reading
- Ensure all claims made are well supported (e.g. everyday correspondence)
- Remember Assessors are not naïve!
- Logically organise your portfolio – it should tell a story
- Organise the portfolio ensuring links are accurate and evidence is obvious and easy to find. Assessors should not have to hunt for it!
- If including reports in standard “company approved” format e.g. a risk assessment or set of local rules, provide supporting material to demonstrate your actual contribution to the document
- State the obvious

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## Think Like an Assessor





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## Who are the Assessors?

- They care about the profession
- They come from all parts of the industry
- They really want to pass candidates!
- They are all generally very busy people
- They do this largely in their spare time!



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## Presentation of Evidence



- Presentation is key – make sure it's readable
- If it looks like you don't care why should we?
- Make the assessors job easy
- Keep them on your side
- Follow the instructions and available guidance

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## Portfolio Content

- Less is often more!
- Quality rather than quantity
  - One recertification portfolio was 10 cm thick!
- The more unusual or obscure the evidence, it is likely that more detail is required in the contextual statements!



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## Remember what an RPA is!

- RPA is an appointment under The Ionising Radiations Regulations
- Assessors want to see evidence generally relating to those regulations
- Items strictly under environmental legislation can be acceptable
  - They should not dominate



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## General examples of bad contents

- Loose survey results with no explanation
- E-mails with no explanation
- Meeting Minutes showing that the candidate had sent their apologies!
- Corporate documentation with no explanation of the candidates input
- Pre-printed documents with simple tick boxes

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## General examples of bad contents (2)

- Entire contents of a training package
- A training programme as evidence the candidate gave the training but without the candidates name on it
- Evidence containing wrong advice!
- Evidence by someone else claimed as your own

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## Learning Based Activities (1)

- Courses, Conferences and Workshops - What's needed?
  - Programme and evidence of attendance, e.g. Certificate, Delegate list (former preferred as you may not have got there on the day!!)
  - Some Assessors prefer a short statement of what you learned (a couple of sentences per topic) but some don't!
  - Not wise to claim over the hours stated as appropriate CPD on the certificate unless you feel you can justify it! – if so make a good case!



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## Learning Based Activities (2)

- Private Study can be claimed but is often underused. Why?
  - Are applicants unsure what the evidence required actually is?
- All you need is a copy of what has been studied (e.g. HSE newsletter) and a few notes on what it has done to help you in your RPA role



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## Competence Based Activities (Section 2)

- Many candidates claim 1, 2 or 4 points when the guidance says 3 or 5 points are available
  - If you are unsure of the points value of the evidence don't expect the assessor to correct it
- Always provide appropriate evidence to substantiate a claim
  - An agenda alone to prove attendance at a meeting is not good evidence. Better to provide minutes to show what input was made

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## Section 2.9 – Routine RPA Role (1)

- Examples of good evidence are in the notes – use them
- Always provide contextual statements detailing how points have been derived
- Appointment letters are essential!
  - but with no supporting evidence of typical work performed you will not get the full points
- Where you have many small RPA contracts, provide example contracts /appointment letters, not just a long list of clients

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## Section 2.9 Routine RPA Role (2)

- Evidence of routine work should indicate some level of professional proficiency.
  - Routine dose assessment reviews should be where some degree of interpretation / investigation was required, not just zero  $\mu\text{Sv}$
  - Reviews of routine radiological surveys should include examples where conditions required to be followed up

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## Corporate RPA Bodies



- If part of an Corporate RPA Body it must be clear what ***you*** have done as an RPA.
- Ensure your individual input / role is both clear and covers a reasonable breadth of the regulations.
- If your organisation's Quality Management System enforces a company audit approach that removes reference to the IRR's / ACOP then ***additional material showing relevant IRR's*** needs to supplement the submitted Company proforma evidence

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## Interaction with the Regulator (Section 2.3)

- Make sure this is a clear example of conveying relevant radiation protection issues to the regulator
- A simple diagram that you talked around will require a lot of explaining to the assessor as he is not telepathic!

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## Use of Lecture Material

- Lectures are a sound way to show reinforcement of your knowledge, but..
- They should not be examples of very basic science which has no reference to the IRR's and which probably you have given countless times
- Be selective in what you use to show you are active in spreading the word of Radiation Protection at a reasonable level of competence

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## Summary of Part 1

- Put yourself in the assessors' place
- Follow the instructions and guidance
- Make it as easy possible for the assessor
- Ensure evidence is clear; provide appropriate contextual statements as clarification
- Provide a varied range of supporting evidence

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## Part 2

### General Question and Answer Session

*Your chance to discuss any specific re-certification portfolio questions and share ideas*