Chartered Institute of
Information Security

Guidance for Accredited Membership

September 2024

V1.0

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

CIISec promotes, develops, and represents the professionalism, integrity and excellence of those operating within cyber, digital and information security.

Accredited membership seeks to formally recognise the excellence that exists amongst cyber, digital and information security individuals, in the same way that many other professions accredit skills and standards. The accreditation process is an assessment of competency, which requires the individual to provide a portfolio of evidence against mandatory, essential and technical (specialist) skills from the CIISec Skills Framework which is then peer reviewed.

To apply for accredited membership, you will first need to be an Affiliate member of CIISec, but there is **no prerequisite that an individual must hold a lower level of CIISec accredited membership** to the one that is being applied for.

When committing to the application process, it is essential that the applicant understands all the elements and requirements that completing the application places upon them.

There are four accredited levels of CIISec membership – Accredited Affiliate, Associate, Full and Fellow. It should be noted that this guidance does not cover the Fellow level or Professional Registration as these have different requirements.

If you have any additional needs or specific requirements, then please contact CIISec, at your earliest convenience on 0203 384 0399 or e-mail accreditation@ciisec.org, so that CIISec can support you through the membership application process.

2. Membership Levels and Skill Requirements

This section provides details of the requirements when applying for Accredited Affiliate, Associate and Full membership, as each level has different requirements.

2.1 Accredited Affiliate

If you hold one of the following qualifications, then you can apply to upgrade from Affiliate to Accredited Affiliate.

- Graduated from a NCSC Certified cyber related course from a CIISec Academic Partner (*subject to sufficient qualifying credits)
- Completed a Level 3 apprenticeship in Cyber Security
- Completed the CyberEPQ with a grade B or higher
- Completed the College of Policing, Op Modify Box Set (10 episodes)
- Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA) – ISACA
- Certified Information Systems Manager (CISM) – ISACA
- Certified Chief Information Security Officer (C/CISO) – EC-Council
- Certified in Risk and Information Systems Control (CRISC) – ISACA
- Certificate in Information Security Management Principles (CISMP) – BCS
- Certificate in EC-Council Information Security Management (EISM) EC-Council
- Graduate of Cyber Security – CapsLock
- CompTIA Security+ - CompTIA
- Microsoft 365 Certified: Security Administrator Associate - Microsoft

Provided you have already applied for Affiliate membership and have a paid-up member profile, send the relevant certificate to accreditation@ciisec.org to receive the upgrade.

2.2 Associate

If you hold one of the following certificates, then there is no requirement to complete the Associate application process. You can apply to upgrade by sending in the relevant in date certificate to accreditation@ciisec.org.

- Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)
- CompTIA Advanced Security Practitioner (CASP+)
- Digital Forensics Apprenticeship at Level 4

If you **do not** hold any of the certificates above, then you will need to apply and go through the accredited application process.

First, download the latest version of the CIISec Skills Framework from the members area of the CIISec website. The Skills Framework defines the skills and capabilities expected of cyber digital and information security professionals in their practical application and is not just an assessment of their knowledge. It is recognised that not all roles require detailed experience in all competency areas. Security professionals can have either a deep specific specialist knowledge and/or a broad understanding of security. Many sectors also have specific Legislation and Regulations and sometimes bespoke technologies. The Framework is agnostic to this and therefore enables individuals to map to their sector.

Evidence Requirements

Evidence has been broken down into 3 categories: Mandatory, Essential and Technical (Specialist). The requirement is that two pieces of evidence should be supplied in the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) format for all skills being evidenced (more detail on STAR is provided on page 12).

For the Associate level the total self-assessed score from all skill areas (A-K), over a *minimum of eight* skills or *a maximum of twelve* skills, should have a total self-assessed score of *no less than 30*.

Mandatory

Applicants are required to provide evidence against all four of the Mandatory skills (J1, J2, J3 and K3), with a total self-assessed minimum score of seven from the four skills.

Essential

Applicants need to evidence a **minimum of three** of the five Essential skills (A2, A6, B2, G1 and G2), with **at least one** of the skills having a self-assessed **score of four**.

Technical (Specialist)

Applicants at the Associate level may only need to evidence one technical/specialist skill which should have a self-assessed level of four, the maximum number of technical/specialist skills that should be evidenced is five. If more are evidenced, they will not be assessed.

If an applicant is using one of the essential skills as their specialist skill, then another skill will still need to be evidenced as the minimum requirement is eight skills.

It should be noted that if an applicant holds one of the certifications detailed on the CIISec application form, then they are entitled to claim a total score of two towards their overall self-assessed score.

To summarise for Associate applications:

Mandatory Skills (J1, J2, J3, K3)	• Must complete and obtain a score in each of the Mandatory skills. • Total minimum score of **7** from across the Mandatory skills
Essential Skills (A2, A6, B2, G1, G2)	• Must complete 3 from the 5 Essentials with at least 1 with a minimum score of **4**
Specialism Skills (A-I)	• At least 1 of the Technical (Specialist) skills must have a minimum score of **4**
Total requirements	• Total skills areas to complete min=8, max=12 • Total minimum score of **30** (from A-K) • 2 pieces of evidence to be provided against each skill

2.3 Full

If you are not upgrading, download the latest version of the CIISec Skills Framework from the members area of the CIISec website. The Skills Framework defines the skills and capabilities expected of security professionals in their practical application and is not just an assessment of their knowledge. It is recognised that not all roles require detailed experience in all competency areas. Security professionals can have either a deep specific specialist knowledge and/or a broad understanding of security. Many sectors also have specific Legislation and Regulations and sometimes bespoke technologies. The Framework is agnostic to this and therefore enables individuals to map to their sector.

Evidence Requirements

Evidence has been broken down into 3 parts, Mandatory, Essential and Technical (Specialist).

The requirement is that two pieces of evidence should be supplied in the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) format for all skills being evidenced (more detail on page 12).

The total self-assessed score from all skill areas (A-K), over a minimum of eight, maximum of fourteen skills, should have a total self-assessed score of no less than 40.

Mandatory

Applicants are required to provide evidence against all four of the Mandatory skills (J1, J2, J3 and K3), with a total self-assessed minimum score of fifteen from the four skills.

Essential

Applicants need to evidence a minimum of three of the five Essential skills (A2, A6, B2, G1 and G2), with at least one of the skills having a self-assessed score of five.

Technical (Specialist)

Applicants at the Full level may only need to evidence one specialist skill which should have a self-assessed level of five, the maximum number of specialist skills that should be evidenced is seven. If more are evidenced, they will not be assessed.

If an applicant is using one of the essential skills as their specialist skill, then another skill will still need to be evidenced as the minimum requirement is eight skills.

It should be noted that if an applicant holds one of the certifications detailed on the CIISec application form, then they are entitled to claim a total score of two towards their overall self-assessed score.

To summarise for Full applications:

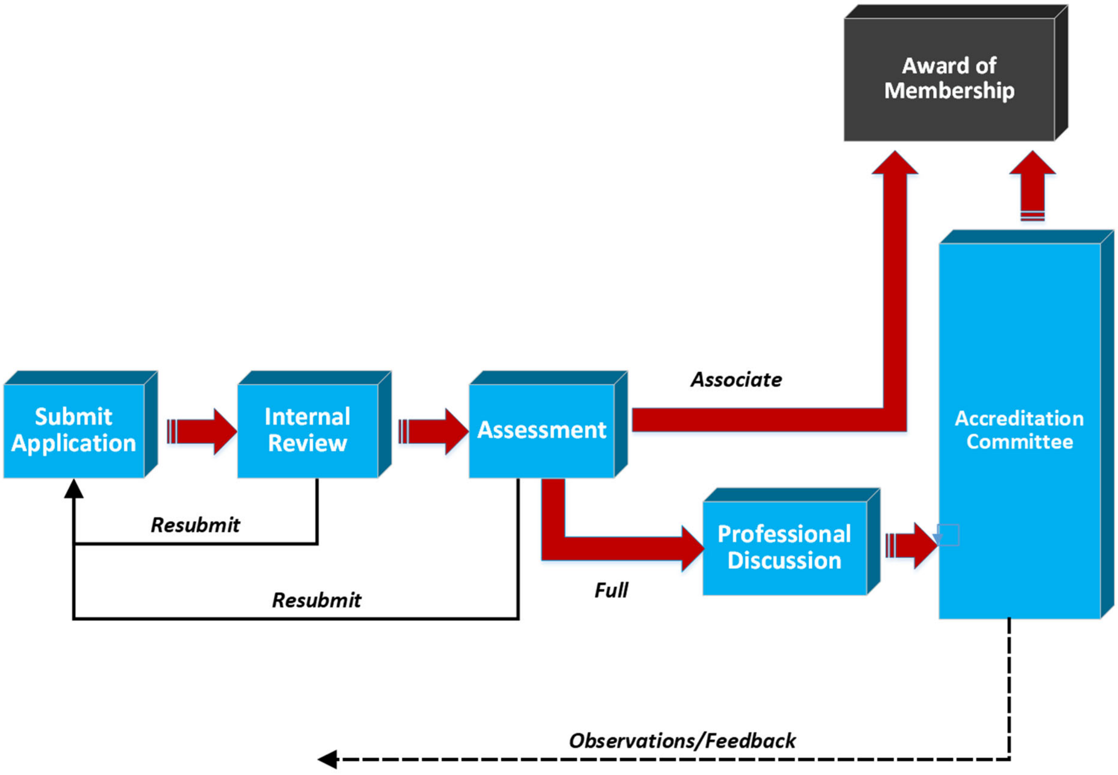
Mandatory Skills (J1, J2, J3, K3)	• Must complete and obtain a score in each of the Mandatory skills. • Total minimum score of **15** from across Mandatory skills
Essential Skills (A2, A6, B2, G1, G2)	• Must complete 3 from the 5 Essentials with at least 1 with a minimum score of **5**
Specialism Skills (A-I)	• At least 1 of the Technical (Specialist) skills must have a score of **5**

Total requirements	• Total skills areas to complete min=8, max=14 • Total minimum score of **40** (from A-K) • 2 pieces of evidence to be provided against each skill

3. Process

The diagram below shows the Associate and Full application process.

It should be noted that some of the stages may take time, as Full and Fellow members volunteer their time to conduct assessments and the Professional Discussion (PD) (which requires 2 different members). Whilst the Accreditation Committee is also made up of volunteers, these meetings take place monthly.



From the above process there are two occasions when the application form may be returned to the applicant. The first is following the internal review which is conducted by the accreditation team. The second is following the initial assessment. If it is returned the expectation is that the applicant will address the issues raised and resubmit within 2-3 weeks of receiving the feedback.

Further detail on the stages can be found later in this document.

4. Completing the Application Form

4.1 Overview

The evidence provided on the application form will be used and processed by CIISec and third parties for the purposes of processing the application through the accreditation process.

To assist the Institute with its assessment of applicants, the applicant's evidence may be passed to appointed referees and volunteers (third parties). These third parties will only process the applicant's data as instructed by CIISec. Application forms are anonymised, before being sent for assessment, so personal data is removed.

As outlined above, by submitting an application form for accredited membership the applicant consents to the processing and transfer of their data.

If the applicant has any concerns about their information being processed in this manner, please contact the Accreditation Team at accreditation@ciisec.org before proceeding.

The application form will be retained for a period of three years post the applicant's award, after which time it will be deleted if membership has not been maintained. Under no circumstances will any personal information provided be used for marketing purposes, other than by CIISec if accredited membership is achieved.

4.2 Form

The application form can be used to apply for either Associate or Full membership and the applicant must choose the level and confirm this before completing the rest of the form. The application is made up of four parts, the following provides more guidance on what is expected in each of the sections.:

Part 1 – Personal Information

Section A	Insert personal information, contact and employer details. If the applicant has worked in a sensitive organisation or area, then this can be marked official sensitive. Complete details of CIISec membership
Section B	If you hold one of the recognised certificates enter the date achieved and the level. In the second table enter any other qualifications or training courses which are **relevant** to this application. In the 'Mode of Study' column, please use terms such as 'classroom', 'e-learning' or 'self-study'.

Part 2 – Employment and Experience History

Section A	Enter relevant employment, roles and responsibilities in this section. The applicant's most recent experience should be entered first. If the applicant's employment is sensitive/confidential then please mention this on the form.

Section B	If the applicant has published any articles or presented at relevant/appropriate conferences, enter details in this section. Do not attach copies or include links as these are not required.

Part 3 – Applicant Competence Against the Mandatory, Essential and Technical (Specialist) Skills

Section A	This section is for the Mandatory skills and in the “Skill Identifier” column you will see the identifier of the mandatory skills the applicant must provide evidence against. Provide **two pieces of evidence for all** of the Mandatory skills by entering one item of evidence for each row in the table. The total score for these skills must add up to relevant score for the level of membership being applied for. Associate – total self-assessed score should be a minimum of 7 Full – total self-assessed score should be a minimum of 15
Section B	This section is for the Essential skills, of which you need to evidence a **minimum of three** from the five listed. Provide two pieces of evidence for each of the Essential skills chosen, entering one item of evidence for each row in the table. There is a requirement for one of the skills to meet a minimum score depending on the level being applied for. Associate - At least one of the Essential skills must score **4 or above.** Full – At least one of the Essential skills must score **5 or above**
Section C	This section is for the Technical (Specialist) skills. Please enter the ‘Skill Group Identifier’ for the skills you choose. At Associate and Full the applicant must evidence at least one skill in this section, the minimum number of skills to be evidenced is eight and this must meet the minimum score for the level being applied for. Associate – evidence a maximum of 5 skills (total number of skills 12) with at least one scoring 4. Full – evidence a maximum of 7 skills (total number of skills 14) with at least one scoring 5.

The self-assessed total from the three sections above and section 1B should be a minimum of:
Associate = 30
Full = 40	

Part 4 – Declarations

Section A	The applicant must sign and date this section. This is where the applicant agrees to the CIISec membership Terms and Conditions and their obligations under them.
Section B	Enter the contact details of 2 Referees who have given the applicant permission for their details to be shared in relation to the applicant’s membership application.
Section C	This section is for additional needs or specific requirements and aids CIISec to ensure the applicants application will be processed in the most appropriate way.

4.3 Evidence

When putting together the evidence to meet the skill requirements, the application form uses the STAR format (Situation, Task, Action, Result). It is important to note that this format enables the applicant to present and organise their evidence in a format that focuses the content in the areas that the assessor is looking to measure competency against. It is highly recommended this format is used and that applicants do not remove the headings.

The elements of STAR are described as follows:

Recommended minimum quantity of written evidence for STAR	
Situation	1 to 3 lines detailing the circumstances and environment in which the issue occurred
Task	1 to 3 lines detailing what the applicant was required to do. This should reflect the key elements of the skill requirement.
Action	6 to 8 lines describing in detail the action taken that the applicant was personally responsible for. The sentences should describe the what, how, why and rationale for the actions taken, providing evidence of the applicant's competency in the skill. Applicants should not abbreviate or assume that the assessor uses the same terminology, therefore a clear description of action is important.
Result	1 to 3 lines describing what the outcome of the applicant's action was and how it related to the task and situation.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Situation,_Task,_Action,_Result.

CIISec are not expecting, nor wanting, "War and Peace" for each piece of evidence.

If the applicant has worked on a project/case etc. and this covers more than one skill they are evidencing, then it is acceptable to use this. However, we do not expect to see a "cut and paste" of the same piece of evidence from one skill to another as the skill requirements are different and the assessor will be looking for the applicant to show their breadth and depth of skills and knowledge to meet the skill requirement at the chosen self-assessed level. It is important that the applicant demonstrates the relevance of their evidence for each skill and the assessor will expect the applicant to comply with this.

It is important to stress that if any of the applicant's work is particularly sensitive or classified then CIISec **cannot process** this evidence, especially where the evidence submitted contains sensitive information. Therefore, evidence should be more generic in nature, showing the issues and challenges without direct reference to operation names, code words, system names etc. CIISec do have Assessors who hold security clearances, including some with DV, if the applicant has concerns. At the Full Level applicants are advised not to include any evidence that they will not be able to discuss during the Professional Discussion.

5. What to Submit

The following should be attached to the applicant's submission e-mail to accreditation@ciisec.org :

- The completed application form, in an editable format, ideally Microsoft word.
- Relevant certificate (if claiming 2 points against a listed certificate).

6. Internal Review

Once the application form is received it will be acknowledged. The applicant will be issued with a unique number and the internal review will take.

In some cases, the application may be returned to the applicant with feedback detailing recommended revision. Once resubmitted or if no revisions are required the application will be anonymised ready for the next stage which is assessment.

It is essential that the applicant responds promptly to any communication from the accreditation team otherwise the application may be delayed.

7. Assessment

The anonymised application form will be sent to an assessor for assessment. The aim of the assessment is to determine whether the applicant should be recommended for award of the membership level applied for or, in the case of Full applications, be put forward to the Professional Discussion stage. Applications requiring additional evidence will be returned with specific feedback on the skills needing more detail. It should be noted that following this feedback applicants will only have one opportunity to update and resubmit their evidence and this should be completed within the timeframe given by CIISec. It will then be reassessed.

The assessor will be at minimum a Full Member, they will have undertaken some training on assessing and conducting Professional Discussions against the CIISec Skills Framework and will be volunteering their time to complete the assessment. When assessing the written evidence, they will use the following to determine whether the evidence meets the required standard for the level:

Clear Evidence is written clearly and without abbreviations.

Level The evidence reflects the membership level and self-assessed scoring.

Evidence The application contains evidence rather than narrative.

Applicant The evidence is about what the applicant did or led and their part in it.

Relevant The evidence relates to the self-assessed skill level being evidenced.

Following the assessment if the assessor identifies that any skills have not been sufficiently evidenced, then feedback will be sent to the applicant. This will detail the comments provided by the assessor highlighting the revisions required.

Applicants should resubmit in a timely manner. The revised application will then be sent for reassessment before progressing to the next stage, depending on the level being applied for.

8. Professional Discussion (Full Membership)

Following a successful assessment, the applicant will be invited to attend a Professional Discussion. These are normally held over Microsoft Teams and will be conducted by a minimum of two current full/fellow members. The discussion should last between 45 minutes to an hour. It is expected that between 4-6 skill areas will be discussed during that time. Once the Professional Discussion has completed a written recommendation will be made. This will then be put forward to the Accreditation Committee (AC).

9. Accreditation Committee

The Accreditation Committee is made up of a number of Full and Fellow members. The aim of the AC is to ensure that a consistent standard is applied across all membership applications and assessments and that the standards expected by the Institute are maintained at all levels. AC members consider the recommendations individually and then meet to discuss and make the final decision on which membership level is appropriate.

10. Notification of Outcome

Once the Accreditation Committee has reviewed and agreed the level of membership to be awarded the applicant will be notified. If the awarded level is not at the level applied for then feedback will be provided, including details on how to appeal the decision.