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Respiratory Protective Equipment Fit Test Providers Accreditation Scheme

Candidate Handbook

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fit2fit ACCREDITED RPE Fit Test Provider

The mission of the *Fit2Fit* RPE Fit Test Provider Accreditation Scheme is to improve and ensure the quality of the fit testing of RPE, contributing to significant reductions in the incidence of occupational respiratory disease.

An Accreditation scheme for RPE Fit Test Providers

HSE Statement. "In preparing the Fit2Fit RPE Fit Testers Accreditation Scheme, BSIF and other industry stakeholders have worked closely with the experts in the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Following this scheme is not compulsory and employers are free to take other actions to comply with the law. But if you following this scheme you will be doing enough to demonstrate good practice.

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To be sure you have the latest document, please visit the website www.fit2fit.org where copies of the most current document are available.

If you wish to discuss any part of this scheme, please contact
Fit2Fit Accreditation scheme. c/o BSIF 3, Austin Mews, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP1 3AF
Tel 01442 248744. **E Mail** dave.elsworth@bsif.co.uk. **Web** fit2fit.org

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Scheme Overview

It has been recognised by a number of sources* that the competency of some RPE Fit Testers is inadequate to enable them to carry out their function satisfactorily.

This may be because they lack the necessary knowledge, skills, experience and understanding of fit testing and how it should be carried out. Alternatively, they may not have the practical ability to carry out fit testing competently. Even if competence has at some time been achieved, skills may have deteriorated over a period of time.

The net result is that RPE Fit Testing is, on occasions, poorly carried out, potentially risking serious respiratory health deterioration to the wearer.

To overcome this situation, the safety industry (through the the British Safety Industry Federation), operates an 'Industry Self - Regulated' competency accreditation scheme. This scheme will assess whether RPE Fit Testers have sufficient knowledge, understanding and practical skill to carry out their function satisfactorily and once accredited they will be re-assessed on a regular basis. This scheme is referenced in HSE's Fit Test Guidance document INDG 479 and inspectors are aware of the scheme and its benefits. Where appropriate, HSE will publicise the scheme and its benefits amongst stakeholders.

It should also be clearly understood that this scheme relates to RPE fit testing only. It is essential that recommendations relating to correct PPE for controlling a hazard are not given. This can only be decided upon by the employer, after a thorough risk assessment, followed by analysis of the most appropriate way of overcoming the hazard faced.

Please note:- This is not a training course. The Fit2Fit accreditation scheme is to assess your competence and therefore it is essential you have received prior training and have practical experience of RPE fit testing. To complement the information in HSE's INDG 479 Fit2Fit have published informative Comapnions which will help you prepare for Accreditation Assessment. All of these documents can be downloaded from the Fit2Fit website www.fit2fit.org

*Health and Safety Executive (HSE) via evidence from inspectors. Examples:– fit testing has occurred on people with facial hair, incorrect probing of the mask before testing, procedures not in compliance with HSE guidance . Additionally the HSE's Asbestos Licensing Unit have reported unsatisfactory testing during licensing applications & the British Safety Industry Federation (BSIF) / Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) Manufacturers have also reported similar incidences.

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Accredited Status

Why apply for credited status, what advantages will it deliver?

- **It will demonstrate to HSE inspectors & potential clients that you have a proven competence in RPE Fit Testing**
- **It will demonstrate that you deliver good practice and it will help you and your clients comply with the law and improve the effectiveness of clients Health and Safety policy.**
- **It will gain you a nationally recognised accreditation and will assist client selection when looking for a fit test provider**
- **It will enhance the status of RPE Fit Testing as a 'professional' undertaking.**
- **HSE Inspectors pay particular attention to RPE. Following this scheme will help you ensure good practice.**

Scheme Management

The scheme is managed through a Governing body which is constituted from the major stakeholders within the RPE market sector. These include independent bodies such as The IOM and the TUC, Professional Bodies, and RPE users. The Governing Body's tasks are to warrant the schemes integrity, overview the Knowledge & Competence standards to ensure satisfactory performance and oversee scheme implementation and administration and act as arbitrator in the event of disputes.
In addition to the Governing Board the scheme benefits from a Technical Committee who are responsible for the oversight and implementation of technical developments. In addition to industry experts the Technical Committee includes members of the HSE.

Administration

The administration and day to day management of the scheme is undertaken by the British Safety Industry Federation. This organisation is the trade body of the UK safety industry.

BSIF will maintain the Fit2Fit database, act as the awarding body for accreditation, arrange all testing and assessments and handle the financial aspects of the scheme.

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Fee Structure

The fee structure is as per below

Description	Fees Per Person (excluding VAT)
Qualitative Competency Assessment:- 3 year qualification. Price includes assessment, written examination, registration, certification and accreditation card.	**£575**
Quantitative Competency Assessment:- 3 year qualification. Price includes assessment, written examination, registration, certification and accreditation card.	**£670**
Combined Assessment:- Qualitative & Quantitative	**£895**
Re-Sit Qualitative	**£455**
Re-Sit Quantitative	**£575**
Re-Sit:- Combined	**£795**
Re-Sit: Multiple Choice Exam	**£115**
Certificate	**No cost**
Website Listing	**No cost**

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Accreditation

How the scheme works

Confirming the competence of RPE Fit Test Providers is the key element of the Fit2Fit scheme. As indicated previously, there have been a significant number of incidents where individuals life and health have been put at risk due to poor RPE selection, use and maintenance. Fit testing plays an important part in correct selection. This scheme is included in the HSE guidance document HSE INDG 479 and HSE Inspectors will refer to the scheme as good practice to ensure compliance with the law.

Therefore the core of this scheme is to assess whether RPE Fit Test Providers have both the underpinning knowledge to understand what they are doing & why and the skills to competently conduct fit testing in accordance with the HSE's and Fit2Fit guidance.

Since Fit Testing can be carried out in a number of ways, the accreditation scheme allows an individual to obtain accreditation in one or a number of Fit Test methods. These are:-

- Qualitative Taste Testing
- Quantitative Testing using Controlled Negative Pressure (CNP)
- Quantitative Testing using Ambient Particle Counting (APC)

A face fit tester can be accredited for one or more of the methods. The accreditation document, badge and credentials will clearly indicate for which method accreditation is held.

The test for competence, which leads to accreditation by the BSIF is conducted in two parts. These are;

1, A multiple choice examination paper in which only one answer per question is correct. The minimum pass requirement is 80%. The questions are aimed at ensuring that an individual has the appropriate underlying knowledge to carry out the Fit Testing. The questions are based upon the HSE documents INDG 479 and HSG 53 and Fit2Fit Companions available for all methods. Additionally an understanding of COSHH regulations is required.

All candidates, regardless of which Fit Test method they wish to become accredited in, must successfully pass this examination before accreditation will be granted. Your assessor will not be marking the paper on the day of the assessment, it will be sent to Fit2Fit along with your assessment form for marking.

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2, A practical assessment of the candidate carrying out fit testing will be undertaken using experienced Fit2Fit Fit Test assessors. The examination / assessments will be undertaken at an appropriate location where the competence of an individual to carry out Fit Testing, with fit testing equipment provided by the candidate. Competence will be measured using the guidance provided in HSE INDG 479 and the Fit2Fit Companions. What if' questions will provide part of the assessment process.
The assessor will use an assessment form to assist in their judgement. At the end of the process, you will be requested to read the terms and conditions of Fit2Fit accreditation, confirm you understand these and countersign the 'Observation' portion of the assessment form.

Accessibility: Locations selected for Fit2Fit Assessments and exams will be accessible to all and verified by the scheme administrator and the assessor.

Examination and Reasonable Adjustment: Any candidate who requires additional time to complete the multiple choice exam or the practical assessment or who needs specific support will be accommodated as is appropriate. A request for additional time or extra support must be submitted in advance and supported by evidence such as a learning disability statement.

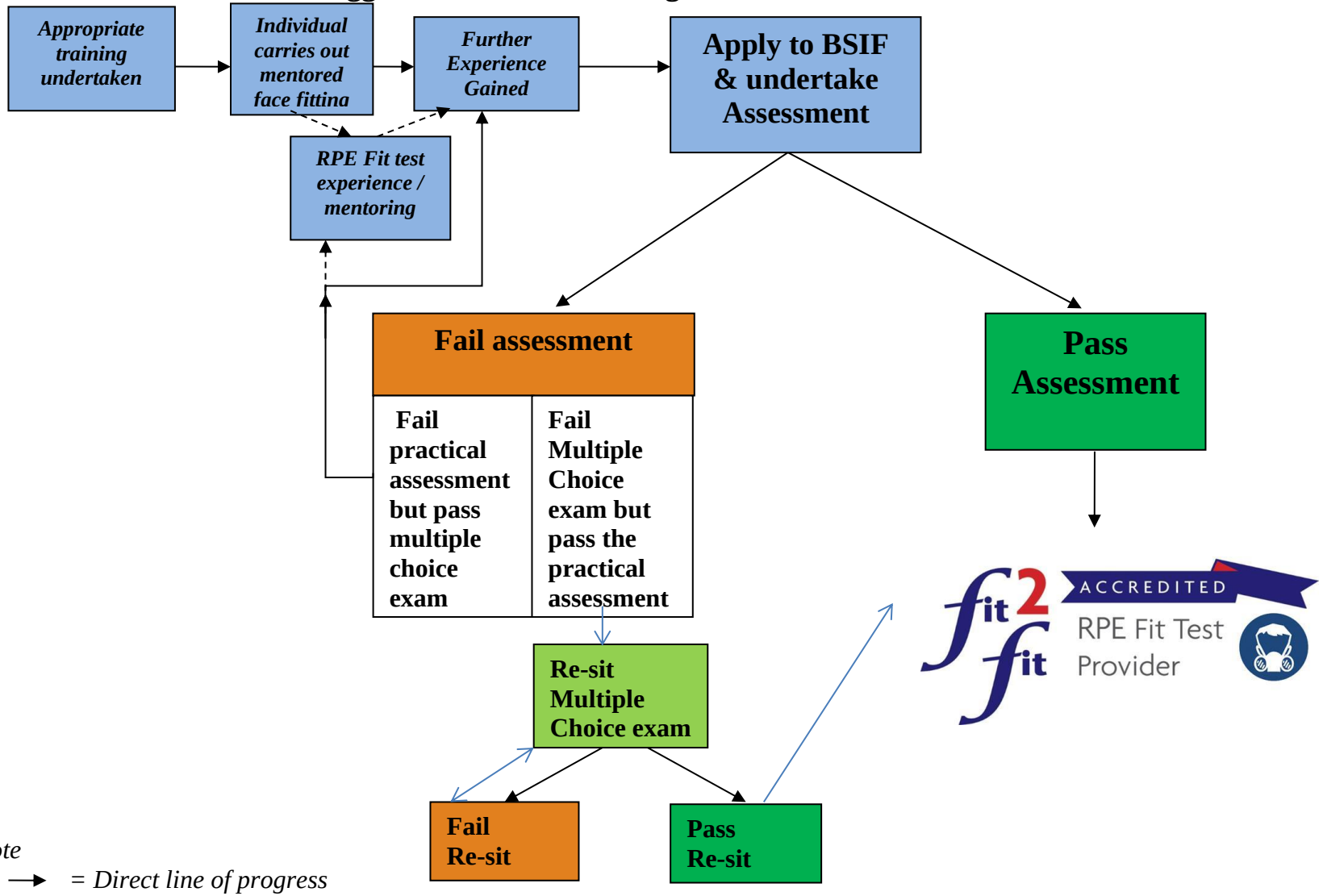
Upon passing the exam and satisfactory completion of the assessment process, each candidate will be informed of their results, within 30 days. If a candidate has been successful they will receive a Certificate of Competence and issued with an ID card confirming they have passed the competence knowledge and assessment process, and are accredited as such by the Fit2Fit scheme. Each card will clearly indicate the fit test method the provider is deemed competent to carry out and this information will be detailed on the Fit2Fit website along with any other relevant information such as limitations on product type or brands.

Where a failure has occurred, the candidate will be informed of the reasons and of possible courses of action, at the time the result is communicated. If the multiple choice exam is failed and the assessment passed it is possible to re-sit the exam portion only. Re-sits of the multiple choice exam must occur within 6 months of the original exam. After that period, any pass in the assessment stage will be deemed to have lapsed and the practical assessment and the multiple choice theory examination will require to be re taken. Similarly if the multiple choice exam has been passed but the practical assessment failed the candidate need only retake the assessment section. The same time limitations will apply.

The accreditation will be valid for a maximum period of three years, at the end of that period a further re-assessment will be required to extend the validity by a further three years, and so on. The re-assessment process will include verbal questions relating to any market changes or updates. Retaking the multiple choice examination will not be required until after 6 years (being the 3rd accreditation)

Fit2Fit reserves the right to remove accreditation at any time. This particularly refers to instances of poor practice, reported to and investigated by BSIF, but the accredited individual has the right of appeal to the Governing Body.

A suggested route to achieving Fit 2 Fit Accreditation:



Note

→ *= Direct line of progress*

⇢ *= Background experience to be gained at each stage*

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Applying for Fit2Fit Accreditation.

Applications for assessment to become an Accredited RPE Fit Test Provider should be made to the scheme administrator, BSIF, contact details are given below. Alternatively you can download an application form from the website www.fit2fit.org. The application form will ask you to confirm, in which of the fit test methods (eg Quantitative (APC) or (CNP) or the Qualitative method) you wish to be accredited. **It is essential you answer this question.**

BSIF will contact you to make a suitable appointment for the assessment. If you are part of a larger company requirement, assessment may be possible on your premises, provided 3+ candidates are available at one time.

Please note; when attending the assessment session photographic proof of identity will be required.

What preparation should I undertake?

You will be expected to have a good knowledge of HSE documents INDG 479 and HSG 53 as well as the guidance contained in the Fit2Fit Companions. Additionally, and in particular, a detailed knowledge of the type RPE and the Fit testing method you will be using. The documents referenced above can be downloaded from the Fit2Fit website www.fit2fit.org. The enclosed Fit2Fit syllabus is derived from these, clearly explaining the underpinning knowledge you should have and the practical competency skills required.

Please note: This is not a training course. The Fit2Fit accreditation scheme is to assess your competence and therefore it is essential you have received appropriate prior training and have sufficient practical experience of RPE fit testing. Should you require Face Fit training the Fit2Fit website lists Fit2Fit Approved Training Courses www.fit2fit.org/fit2fit-approved-training-providers/

The Fit2Fit criteria to achieve accreditation is to pass both an exam to confirm your underpinning knowledge of RPE & Fit testing and, a practical assessment of your competence to undertake a fit test.

It will be necessary to have completed appropriate training and mentoring prior to assessment to ensure competence. It is unlikely that without training and 'on the job' experience, accreditation will be achieved. Fit2Fit have assessed a number of individuals straight from 'training courses' and the lack of in - depth of knowledge and experience quickly shows through. Fit2Fit recommends that newly trained testers are mentored in the role for a period to gain the essential on-the-job experience.

At the assessment stage, you will be expected to bring your own fit testing equipment and ensure it is working properly and appropriately calibrated. You will also be required to set your equipment up from 'scratch' and undertake appropriate checks prior to testing.

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During the assessment, you will be given a selection of RPE to fit test to an individual. These may be **any** make of facepiece on the market and could include any type of RPE applicable to the fit test method against which you are being assessed. For example, for the qualitative method it could be any make model or size of filtering facepieces or half masks and with the quantitative method any make model or size of filtering facepiece, half or full face mask. It is therefore essential you bring with you appropriate equipment upon which you may be assessed. Note:- For Quantitative (APC) accreditation, there will be a strong emphasis placed on correct probing of the facepiece. It is essential to fully understand how facepieces should be probed.

Please note we will not allow the use of your own RPE. The scheme is designed to ensure accredited fit testers can offer competent RPE fit tests across the range of RPE available. In some specialist cases, selected / limited product accreditation may be allowed. Please contact BSIF in advance of the assessment to discuss.

You will not only be assessed in your ability to handle normal situations, but also your ability to troubleshoot a range of circumstances and scenarios which could occur during fit testing.
Again, experience has shown that a sufficient level of expertise to prove competency and achieve accreditation is most often gained from appropriate formal training followed by in field experience under the supervision of a mentor.

Should you require Face Fit training the Fit2Fit website lists Fit2Fit Approved Training Courses www.fit2fit.org/fit2fit-approved-training-providers/

The Assessment Procedure

During the assessment, candidates will be asked to carry out a fit test as they normally would.
Please ensure that you are familiar with the requirements of the Fit2Fit scheme and have read and understand the syllabus. You will be expected to undertake the following steps to demonstrate your competence. The assessor will clearly explain the process at the start of the assessment and may ask questions during the assessment.

You will be expected to:

1. Assess that the facilities provided for fit testing are suitable;
   Note: As the assessment will normally be at an independent assessment venue you will be asked about the suitability of the facilities for the fit test method on which you are being assessed.

2. Set up the equipment and perform the necessary preliminary checks and actions required prior to performing a fit test.

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3. Check and confirm that the fit test equipment you are using is in full working order;

4. Brief the person who you will be fit testing on the purpose of fit testing, on the test exercises and how they should be carried out. You will also be expected to offer guidance to the wearer in the correct donning of the mask. **Note** Fit2Fit will normally provide the person (wearer) on whom you will be performing the fit test.

5. Examine any RPE presented to you by the assessor. You will be expected to identify and rectify any faults or problems with face pieces prior to fit testing.

6. Be able to identify make, model and size of face pieces.

7. Check and confirm that the person who you will be fit testing has presented themselves as required.

8. For assessment in the Quantitative (APC) method you will be expected to "probe" two Full Face Masks, one half mask and one filtering face piece for the fit test. Subsequently, one of these masks will be selected for use during the assessment of the practical face fit test.

9. Carry out a complete fit test using the method for which you are being assessed.

10. Undertake any appropriate remedial actions, depending on the results of the fit test.

11. Explain the results of the fit test

12. Make a record of the fit test.

13. Perform any appropriate post fit test procedures applicable.

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Responsibilities

1/ **Fit2Fit Scheme**

1.1/ Fit2Fit will carry out the initial examination, assessments and reassessments to determine competence against the published criteria. The result of each stage will be supplied to the individual for their information.

1.2/ Fit2Fit undertakes to apply the criteria for accreditation consistently and to provide from its own staff or through sub-contractors suitably qualified personnel to perform the examination and assessment process.

1.3/ Once Fit2Fit is satisfied of an individual's competence against the published criteria, Fit2Fit will issue an accreditation certificate and badge, which will remain in force for the defined period.

1.4/ In the event of any complaint or incident occurring with an Accredited Fit Test Provider, Fit2Fit reserve the right to require the provider to be re-assessed (at Fit2Fit's cost). In a case deemed to be sufficiently serious by the Fit2Fit Governing Body, Accreditation may be suspended until the incident has been investigated and a successful re-assessment has been undertaken. Fit2Fit also reserves the right to carry out additional unscheduled surveillance visits as it may reasonably be required to ensure ongoing levels of competency are maintained.

1.5/ In the event of an unsuccessful re-assessment, Fit2Fit reserve the right to withdraw accredited status at any stage and with immediate effect. This will be communicated to the Fit Test Provider in writing. Original assesment fees will not be refunded.

2/ **Accredited Fit Test Provider**

2.1 At all times to comply with the Fit2Fit terms and conditions and its relevant requirements.

2.2 Not to use the accreditation in such a manner as to bring the Fit2Fit Scheme it into disrepute and to take appropriate steps to correct an action or statement used by the provider and or its clients which Fit2Fit consider to be misleading.

2.3 To make it clear to all clients that accreditation does not imply Fit2Fit in any way accepts liability for the actions of a Fit Test Provider. The scheme merely confirms the competence of a Fit Test Provider at the point of assessment.

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2.4 All Fit2Fit Accredited RPE fit test providers must have sufficient liability insurance to cover any possible actions taken against them and will indemnify Fit2Fit against any sub-action which may be started against the accreditation scheme.

2.5 Use their best endeavours to utilise their skills on each and every fit test. Fit2Fit Accredited RPE Fit Test Providers must ensure they adhere to the requirements of HSE INDG 479 as well as the guidance contained in the Fit2Fit companions at all times when undertaking fit testing. It is also essential that their equipment is appropriate, fully maintained and calibrated, where applicable (according to manufacturer's instructions).

Confidentiality:- The accredited fit test provider agrees that all data collected regarding individuals or companies and including details regarding the Fit2Fit scheme are treated as confidential and not disclosed to any third party without the express agreement of the scheme, company or individual.

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Terms & Conditions

The following terms and conditions apply to all Fit Test Providers and Assessors applying for accreditation to the Fit2Fit scheme.

1/ Payment:- All fees are paid in advance. The fee is not refundable if a candidate withdraws from the accreditation process or fails to turn up.

2/ Accredited status:- Accredited status is granted to the individual achieving the required competence level. It is not a 'company' status or transferable to any other party, in anyway. Accredited status will remain with the individual until the accredited period expires (a maximum of three years). Within the 3 year period, re-accreditation can be applied for and following a successful assessment be granted for a further 3 years and so on.

Accreditation of an individual does not indicate or imply accreditation of a company. However where the fit test provider is an employee of a company, the company may use the Fit2Fit logo to promote the accredited services of **the individual** who holds accreditation.

3/ Failure to pass the exam or assessment stages:- There is no limit to the number of times the exam or assessment process can be entered into. On each occasion, the appropriate fee is payable. In regard to the assessment, a minimum of 1 month must have passed before re-assessment can be undertaken and following three consecutive failures, a minimum of 3 months will be required before reassessment will be available.

4/ Cancellations. Candidates wishing to cancel their assessment must give BSIF in excess of 1 months notice. Cancellations of assessment between I month and 1 week from the assessment will bear an admin fee of £320 and the full fee is chargeable for cancellations within 1 week.

5/ Appeals:- If at any stage a candidate for the exam or assessment process believes the process has been unfairly carried out, an appeal can be lodged (in writing or e mail) to the Fit2Fit governing board, via the schemes administrator (BSIF). The Governing board will appoint a panel of not less than two independent adjudicators, who will investigate the complaint and report to the governing board within 30 working days of the original contact. The decision of the governing board will be final in all cases. The decision will be communicated to the candidate within 30 working days of receiving the adjudicators report.

6/ Removal of Accredited status:- The Fit2Fit Governing board reserves the right to suspend or withdraw RPE fit test provider accredited status from an individual, at any time, as it deems appropriate. Withdrawal of accredited status will be communicated in writing to the individual (along with the cause) and an opportunity to appeal will be granted.

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The major cause for accreditation suspension / removal will be incompetence in carrying out the RPE Fit test procedures as required by the schemes syllabus. Other causes (such as bringing the scheme into disrepute, non payment of fees etc) may also lead to accreditation withdrawal and in all cases the decision of the Governing body will be final.

The Governing board will appoint a panel of not less than two independent adjudicators, who will investigate the circumstances for removal / suspension of accredited status and report to the governing board within 30 working days. The decision will be communicated to the individual within 30 working days of receiving the adjudicators report.

Re-establishment of accreditation can be achieved through a satisfactory reassessment and if required, satisfactory resolution of any other issue creating the original accreditation removal. In the latter situation, the Governing Body (or their representatives) will make the final decision upon acceptable remedy for the Fit2Fit Scheme.

In the event of accreditation being withdrawn, the individual must, within 1 month of the notification, remove all references of Fit2Fit accreditation from his business correspondence, websites, business cards and any other area that is likely to be seen by prospective Fit Test users. Communication of compliance with this requirement should be made to BSIF within the 1 month period.

7/ Liability:- Accreditation to the Fit2Fit scheme confirms that at the point of assessment, the provider was deemed competent of meeting the schemes criteria. It does not, in any way, imply the scheme will bear any responsibility whatsoever in the event of a provider failing to satisfactorily carry out his duties whilst fit testing (or any other service he may undertake). As a condition of accreditation, accredited providers must ensure they are personally adequately insured against such an event.

In providing the accreditation, neither Fit2Fit, BSIF nor any of its officers, employees or agents warrant the accuracy or completeness of any fit test carried out, information or advice supplied.

All Fit2Fit accredited fit test providers or candidates presenting for accreditation must have either their own, or company Professional Indemnity Insurance / Public Liability Insurance. This is a key condition of accreditation and Fit2Fit may ask to see a copy of the appropriate documents.

(BSIF can assist in directing candidates to appropriate Professional Indemnity Insurance suppliers if required).

8/ Limitations. Accreditation to the fit test scheme confirms that at the point of assessment, the fit test provider was deemed competent of meeting the schemes criteria. Fit2Fit cannot guarantee the future and ongoing competence of an accredited Fit Test Provider and it does

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not, in any way, imply the scheme will bear any responsibility whatsoever in the event of the fit test provider failing to satisfactorily carry out their duties whilst fit testing (or any other services they may undertake)

It is the reponsibility of the accredited fit tester to ensure they only undertake fit testing activities to which they have been accredited. Accreditation should not be implied against any fit test method that has not been granted accreditation to the individual and the fit tester must fully acquaint the customer of the area of accredited expertise.

9/ Multiple Fit Testing

It is the opinion of the Fit2Fit Fit Testers Accreditation Scheme, that in order to carry out a competent fit test, the fit test must be carried out on the basis of one fit tester to one RPE wearer.

This is the position for both Qualitative and Quantitative fit test methods.

However, we accept that there are individual fit testers whose skill level in managing the Quantitative (Ambient Particle Counting) fit test method is such that they could competently conduct fit testing for 2 RPE wearers simultaneously.

Acknowledgement of such individual fit testers under the Fit2Fit Fit Testers Accreditation Scheme would be on a case by case basis and subject to specific application and practical assessment.

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Syllabus

The scheme's scope of the required knowledge and understanding is laid out in the enclosed syllabus. This details the knowledge required, both in terms of a written underpinning knowledge test and the practical competence which must be demonstrated to an assessor.

Additionally the syllabus indicates where the information required to gain this knowledge can be gained, (in terms of industry standard documentation such as HSE INDG 479 and HSG 53 as well as the guidance contained in the Fit2Fit Companions, COSHH or other HSE Guidance documents).

Test Chamber Method. The test chamber method is outside of the scope of this scheme. However this method is accredited by UKAS separately and inclusion within the UKAS accreditation scheme will be accepted as appropriate assessment for Fit2Fit accreditation.