

Guide for MCERTS exam success

1. Introduction

A large number of people have sat MCERTS exams. Many have succeeded, others have struggled. Feedback has been received from many candidates after their exams. This has provided information on what went well and what did not. The following guidance is based on this information.

2. How to prepare for multiple choice and narrative papers

The exams are an assessment of your knowledge of your job. However, it is essential to prepare for the exams. Even candidates coming up for re-certification, who have many years of experience in the job, do better if they study and revise for the exams.

Site experience alone is not going to be enough. Detailed knowledge of the methods is required. Therefore, you should:

- Study each of the relevant standards (or their organisation's accredited procedure for each of the standards the exam will cover). The list of methods relevant to each exam is provided. Don't just scan the methods, read them completely. You may be surprised at what you find you have forgotten or did not know, especially if you have not used the method for a while.
- Read the associated Method Implementation Documents. They are important supplements to the standards.
- Practise common calculations (formulas for commonly carried out calculations are provided in Environment Agency technical guidance on stack emissions monitoring – available from www.mcerts.net). In particular, example calculations from the narrative papers are provided on the CSA website:

<http://www.csagroupuk.org/services/mcerts/mcerts-personnel-certification/>

3. The oral exam

The oral exam is carried out to gain a clear understanding of your knowledge and experience. The questions are designed to give you an opportunity to talk about how you do your job. There are no trick questions.

You should prepare for the exam by studying:

- Environment Agency technical guidance on stack emissions monitoring (www.mcerts.net)
- Source Testing Association: Industrial risk assessment guide

However, it is equally important for you to be able to show a good all round level of first hand stack emissions monitoring experience and understanding. This must be gained through carrying out site work and being involved in the planning and reporting of site work.

The interview lasts for approximately one hour. It is carried out by 2 people.

The interview is split into 2 parts. The first part (carried out by one of the examiners) will ask you about planning a sampling campaign. This includes completion of a risk assessment, site review and site specific protocol.

The second part of the interview (carried out by the other examiner) covers on-site sampling work and quality assurance.

Wherever possible, you should use examples of your own on-site experience.