

UK utility schemes



The LRQA Group operates schemes on behalf of the utility industry and their regulators to assess independently service providers seeking to work within the contestable markets in the electricity, gas, and water sectors. There are currently three schemes covering these sectors:

- National Electricity Registration Scheme (NERS)
- Gas Industry Registration Scheme (GIRS)
- Water Industry Registration Scheme (WIRS).

LRQA EMEA also operates a multi-utility recognition status for accredited service providers registered under all three schemes.

About the schemes

The schemes represent part of an ongoing process to introduce competition into the utility market. Each scheme specifies the minimum criteria against which a service provider must be assessed in order to determine their technical competence and achieve accreditation under the relevant scheme. The assessment criteria for the schemes are intended to enable service providers to be recognised as technically competent, aware of design and safety principles, and capable of installing new connections to high levels of quality and safety.

The schemes are intended to help those wishing to procure the services of accredited service providers.

The safety implications and competencies for the installation of infrastructure in the electricity, gas and water sectors differ as do the scopes of accreditation, as detailed in the following pages.

Summary of business benefits
Accreditation under the schemes provides service providers with the following benefits:

- accreditation recognised by utility providers
- independent assessment and registration process
- assignment of an accreditation mark which will represent the achievement
- of a high technical, quality and safety standard
- LRQA website listing of registered service providers

- standardised set of requirements
- single point of contact at LRQA EMEA

National Electricity Registration Scheme (NERS)

NERS has been developed to allow independent connections providers (ICPs) to carry out contestable connection work. Any ICP wishing to carry out this work within the contestable market, as defined by OFGEM, must be accredited under this scheme. All distribution network operators (DNOs) on mainland UK recognise this scheme and, provided that the ICPs hold the appropriate accreditations, the ICP can compete for work within the contestable connections market.

How long does accreditation take?

This will vary considerably dependant on the category and scope of accreditation requested, as well as the performance of the company.

How long does accreditation last for? Accreditation lasts for three years subject to successful surveillance audits by your LRQA Group assessor. The number of surveillance visits you will receive is dependant upon the number of staff undertaking connection work and your scope or works.

How to apply

You will need to complete an Application Form which can be found on the Schemes' websites as listed below. Once you send the form in to our Utilities team, we will contact you to organise a schedule to suit you.

Guidance notes

There are guidance notes available for all schemes on their relevant websites listed below.

How to find a service provider

If you are looking to find a service provider to undertake works on your behalf then please go to the LRQA website www.lrqa.com where lists will provide you with the current approved contractors. Next to each of the contractors' names is a link to their websites which will provide current contact details.

When awarding contracts to registered ICPS, the developer, who is usually the client organisation, can be confident that once the work has been completed, the host DNO will adopt the connection for the remainder of its lifetime.

All contractors who wish to undertake any part of the contestable connections process including project management, design, cable installation etc require the relevant accreditation.

The categories of accreditation are as follows:

- design
- project management
- cable laying (LV,11kV,33kV,132kV)
- cable jointing (dead LV, live LV,11kV, 33kV, 132kV)
- overhead lines wooden pole and/or steel tower (up to 132kV)
- substation installation (up to 11kV/415V)
- substation installation (132/32kV,66/11kV, 33/11kV)
- all associated civil engineering works including excavation, cable laying and backfilling

Gas Industry Registration Scheme (GIRS)
GIRS has been developed to allow utility infrastructure providers (UIPs) to carry out installation, commissioning and connection of gas mains and services to be adopted by gas transporters (GTs). Any UIP wishing to carry out work must be accredited under this scheme.

All GTs on mainland UK recognise this scheme and, provided that UIPs hold the appropriate scope of accreditation, will allow that contractor to tender for, and if successful, undertake installation and

commissioning of gas mains and services work up to 7 barg. Under the terms of a pre-start adoption agreement, once the work has been completed, the host GT will adopt the installed gas infrastructure for the remainder of its lifetime

The scopes of registration are as follows:

- design
- construction/commissioning/connections (routine) [CCCR]
- connections (non-routine, basic [CNRB])
- specialist iris stop connections
- specialist stopple connections
- specialist hot welding connections
- specialist large diameter PE branch connections
- project management
- audit

Water Industry Registration Scheme (WIRS)

WIRS has been developed to allow contractors to carry out installation and commissioning of water mains and services to be adopted by the water utilities (WU). Any self lay organisation (SLO) contracting to carry out contestable work as defined by OFWAT must be accredited under this scheme.

All the WUs within Mainland UK recognise this scheme and provided that the SLO holds the appropriate scopes of accreditation, are able to tender for, and if successful, undertake design, installation and commissioning of water mains and services work. Once the work has been completed, the host WU will adopt the system for the remainder of its lifetime, subject to the SLO meeting all the adoption requirements.

The scope of the Water Industry Registration Scheme is as follows:

- design
- project management
- onstruction of mains and/or services
- construction of routine mains connections (please note for this scope construction of mains and services must be held)
- service connections only
- construction of routine or non-routine mains connections (only applies in Scotland as stand-alone where construction accreditation is not separately)
- meter assets maintenance (only applies to Scotland)
- *new scope launched June 2013* permanent disconnections nonhousehold (only applies to Scotland)

Multi-Utility Recognition Status (MURS)

LRQA EMEA also operates a Multi-Utility Recognition Status (MURS) which allows Service Providers holding full accreditation in the NERS, GIRS and WIRS schemes to transfer to the MURS website listing. The integration of the three schemes under MURS provides for rationalisation of the surveillance programme with the associated reduction in costs to the service provider.

For more information, please refer to the MURS factsheet.

Why work with LRQA?

Our inspectors and trainers are industry experts who work with you to understand what helps your business operate at its optimum level. They create long-lasting value through collaboration, delivering a greater impact on your business, your people and your customers.

We offer you our commitment to inspection excellence, which means protecting your assets and your brand reputation as if they were our own.

How do we do that?

Know more. Risk less. We make sure we know your business and what's important to you, while staying in tune to the wider inspection industry. We give you the knowledge and assurance you need to make informed decisions, helping reduce the risk that comes with competing in today's complex global marketplace.

Why choose LRQA?

We're here to help negotiate a rapidly changing world, by working with you to manage and mitigate the risks you face. From inspection and compliance to data-driven supply chain transformation, it's our job to help you shape the future, rather than letting it shape you. We do this by delivering:

Strategic vision

Our technical know-how, sector expertise and innovative, forward-thinking approach will help you meet the challenges of today – and become a safer, more secure, and sustainable organisation tomorrow.

Technical expertise

Our people are sector experts. They bring with them a clear understanding of your specific challenges, standards and requirements – then deploy deep knowledge of inspection, certification, assurance, cybersecurity and training to help you meet them.

Global capability

Operating in more than 120 countries, recognised by over 30 accreditation bodies worldwide, and covering almost every sector, we can help you reduce risk, drive improvement and build credibility with stakeholders around the globe.

Effective partnership

Every business is unique. That's why our experts work with you, to fully understand your needs and goals, and work out how we can best support them.

Fresh perspective

We have led the way in shaping our industry and continue to take every opportunity to collaborate with clients and pioneer new ideas, services and innovation.

Get in touch

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