

Heritage Skills CSCS Card - Specialist Leadworker

As many contractors are aware, it is intended that by the end of this year anyone working on Heritage sites (pre-1919 buildings) will be required to have a CSCS Heritage Skills Card in their respective trade. This follows a Memorandum of Understanding signed by English Heritage, National Heritage Training Group (NHTG), Construction Skills and the All Party Parliamentary Group for Arts and Heritage.

This is therefore likely to include projects involving English Heritage, CADW, Historic Scotland, National Trust, SPAB, Heritage Lottery Fund and local Government through their Conservation Architects. It will include all pre 1919 buildings, not just those of historical significance.

We now have clarification from CSCS with regard to the route for applications for the new CSCS Heritage Skills Specialist Leadworker card.

We can confirm that all applications will be processed by the LCA Secretariat

There is a "Managed Industry Accreditation" route (effectively a "grandfather rights" period) that will be available to experienced leadworkers until September 2010.

After September 2010, new CSCS Heritage Skills cards will ONLY be issued to those applicants that have successfully achieved Heritage Skills NVQ Level 3.

Contractors wishing to register should complete both the NHTG Application and the CSCS Smartcard Application forms (available from the LCA Secretariat) on behalf of each person that they believe to be competent in heritage work.

For the NHTG form they should provide details as required of sites worked on and the type of work undertaken by the individual concerned. This should be supported by photographs, letters, training certificates, etc if available. The names of contacts (client, contractor, architect, etc) for each site should be provided. These may be contacted by LCA to confirm the details provided.

Those who are not members of the Lead Contractors Association, but who have worked on a heritage site for an LCA member on a sub contract or self employed basis, should give the site details and state the name of the LCA member involved.

The LCA member should then be contacted in order to complete and sign the "Employer Referee" section and the applicant should sign the "Applicant Declaration";

If the applicant is a self employed sub contractor but has not worked for a member of the LCA, the "Employer Referee" section should be completed and signed by a Main Contractor for whom heritage work has been carried out.

The CSCS Smartcard Application should be completed as for normal CSCS card applications.

Most applicants will already have completed the "working at heights" health and safety test, but if not, this must be completed before submitting the application.

Both forms should then be sent to the Secretary at the Lead Contractors Association, Centurion House, 36 London Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 1AB, together with a cheque to the value of £30.00 for every application submitted. The cheque should be made payable to "Construction Skills";

The LCA will complete a desktop evaluation of each candidate, referring to vetting records retained at the LCA secretariat for each member company and training records for individuals held by the LCA and LSA. If necessary we will also contact those persons, LCA members, main contractors, etc involved on each site as provided by the applicant.

Applications that are viewed as "border line" will be referred to the Lead Sheet Association for a practical assessment to be organised. This will be over 2 days and will be charged as an extra cost by the Lead Sheet Association, who will subsequently confirm successful candidates to the LCA, in order for their application to be completed and endorsed.

The practical assessment will be based upon elements taken from the LCA Advanced Silver level training course. Any applicant that has already successfully completed the Advanced Silver or Advanced Gold level course should submit copies of the certificate with their application. The copy of the certificate should be signed by the employer (or by the applicant if self employed) as verifying "a true copy of the original";.

The LCA will endorse applications by signing confirmation on the NHTG form as "External Referee Endorsement / Federation Endorsement" and then submit each application to CSCS Ltd.

CSCS Ltd will then issue a Heritage Skills (Specialist Leadworker) card direct to the applicant.

The LCA has been given the responsibility of processing ALL Specialist Leadworker applications, whether or not from LCA members.

The LCA has the opportunity to verify applications from LCA members through vetting and training records. Obviously there are no vetting records for non-members and it is therefore more likely that non-members would be referred to the LSA for assessment, unless a satisfactory referee is provided. The best type of referee would be a member of the LCA, who are themselves required to work to BS6915 and the recommendations of the Lead Sheet Association and are vetted as such on a regular basis.

To summarise:

- CSCS Heritage Skills cards will likely be required on site by the end of the year for pre-1919 refurbishment projects
- A "grandfather rights" period is available until September 2010
- After September 2010, the ONLY WAY to get a Heritage Skills card will be through NVQ3 assessment
- The LCA is processing ALL Specialist Leadworker applications on behalf of CSCS.
- Applicants should complete both the NHTG "Managed Industry Accreditation" form and the CSCS Smartcard Application
- Employers should endorse the application and submit both forms to LCA, with appropriate payment
- Cost is £30 per applicant, cheques should be made payable to Construction Skills
- LCA will process applications and submit to CSCS
- Border line candidates may be referred to LSA for further assessment.
- For each application endorsed by the LCA, CSCS will issue cards direct to the applicant

The LCA is therefore encouraging all leadworkers to register that are experienced in heritage work and therefore qualify for the CSCS Heritage Skills card.

English Heritage and NHTG have already stated that, provided there is sufficient uptake to ensure skilled trades are available to protect heritage buildings, they will vigorously enforce the exclusive use of cardholder contractors.

It is obviously to the benefit of all leadwork specialists to have their applications processed by the LCA under the Managed Industry Accreditation period, which closes in September 2010.

If there is any query or further information is required, please do not hesitate to call (01342 317888) or email (info@lca.gb.com)