

Accredited Assessor Guidelines

Amateur radio examinations

AUGUST 2023

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Executive summary

This document is the ACMA's Assessor Guidelines for amateur radio examinations. Compliance with this document is a condition of accreditation under the Radiocommunications Accreditation (Amateur Radio Examination) Rules 2023 (Accreditation Rules).

Persons given general assessor accreditation or specialist assessor accreditation in accordance with the Accreditation Rules are referred to as 'accredited assessors' in these Guidelines.

An accredited assessor who does not comply with the Guidelines may be in contravention of one or more conditions of their accreditation. Schedules 1 and 2 of the Accreditation Rules set out the conditions applicable to general and specialist assessor accreditation. An accredited assessor who is found to be in contravention of a condition of accreditation may have their accreditation withdrawn¹.

These Guidelines set out the requirements of an accredited assessor and the operational processes for amateur radio examinations.

In summary, an accredited assessor must:

- > ensure that examination papers are unavailable to candidates before the agreed examination time
- > ensure the correct equipment is available for the practical component of the assessment
- > be vigilant for inappropriate behaviour of candidates during the examination
- > not discuss the meaning of questions with candidates until after the examination is completed
- > not be biased, or seen to be biased, towards candidates
- > inform the ACMA promptly when a candidate's examination may have been compromised.

¹ Under subsection 264A (2) of the *Radiocommunications Act 1992*.

Accreditation process

Kinds of accreditation

There are 2 kinds of accreditation relating to amateur radio examinations:

- > General Assessor Accreditation
- > Specialist Assessor Accreditation.

A General accredited assessor can conduct in-person (face-to-face) and remote examinations (including practical examinations).

A Specialist accredited assessor can conduct in-person (face-to-face), remote and special examinations (including practical examinations).

Qualifications and requirements for accreditation

To apply for a General Assessor Accreditation you must:

- > hold one of the following:
 - > an Amateur Radio Operator's Certificate of Proficiency (Advanced)
 - > an ACMA recognition certificate (Advanced)
 - > an advanced qualification that the ACMA is satisfied is equivalent to one of the above qualifications.
- > have a Working with Children or Vulnerable People Check Clearance (however named), from the state or territory where you will be conducting and assessing amateur examinations.

To apply for a Specialist Assessor accreditation, you must both:

- > hold one of the following:
 - > an Amateur Radio Operator's Certificate of Proficiency (Advanced)
 - > an ACMA recognition certificate (Advanced)
 - > an advanced qualification that the ACMA is satisfied is equivalent to one of the above qualifications.
- > hold a qualification granted by an Australian education organisation in:
 - > education or teaching; or
 - > the assessment of vocation-based training; or
 - > have qualifications, experience or training that the ACMA is satisfied is equivalent to a qualification in education, teaching or the assessment of vocation based training
- > have a Working with Children or Vulnerable People Check Clearance (however named), from the state or territory where you will be conducting and assessing amateur examinations.

The ACMA recommends that accredited assessors be at least 18 years of age at the time of their application.

Application for accreditation

A person may apply to the ACMA for accreditation under section 10 of the Accreditation Rules.

Applicants must complete the form on our website, and return it to:

Manager
Spectrum Licensing Policy Section
spectrumlicensingpolicy@acma.gov.au

or by mail to:

Manager
Spectrum Licensing Policy Section
Australian Communications and Media Authority
PO Box 13112 Law Courts
Melbourne, Victoria, 8010

If an application is incomplete, the ACMA may elect not to proceed with assessing the application until the missing information is provided.

Decisions on accreditation

In considering an application for General Assessor Accreditation or Specialist Assessor Accreditation, the ACMA must have regard to:

- > the object of the *Radiocommunications Act 1992*
- > the person's experience in conducting an approved examination or other examinations of a similar kind
- > the person's qualifications
- > whether, in the 5-year period before the person applied for accreditation, the ACMA had withdrawn accreditation from that person
- > whether that person was on the Australian Maritime College's (AMC) list of Authorised Assessors on the day section 4 of the Accreditation Rules commenced (commencement day)
- > if the person was not on the AMC's List of Authorised Assessors on the commencement day, whether the person had been removed from the list before that time
- > whether the person holds a current Working with Children or Vulnerable People Check in the state or territory where that person intends to conduct or assess amateur radio examinations
- > any other matter the ACMA considers relevant.

After considering these matters, the ACMA may decide to give the applicant General Assessor Accreditation or Specialist Assessor Accreditation depending on the type of accreditation the applicant has applied for.

Alternatively, the ACMA may decide to refuse a person's application for General Assessor Accreditation or Specialist Assessor Accreditation. If the ACMA refuses the person's application, the ACMA must notify the person in writing and provide reasons for the refusal. The person has the right to seek review of the ACMA's decision².

² A person may seek review of the ACMA's decision to refuse to give accreditation under section 263 of the *Radiocommunications Act 1992* (see paragraph 285(v) of that Act).

Accredited Assessor Guidelines

It is a condition of accreditation given in accordance with the Accreditation Rules that all accredited assessors comply with these Guidelines. Non-compliance with these Guidelines may result in withdrawal of the person's accreditation.

These Guidelines may be changed from time to time by the ACMA. Any changes to the Guidelines will be published on the ACMA's website. The ACMA will make every reasonable effort to communicate these changes to accredited assessors as early as possible.

These Guidelines should be read together with the Accreditation Rules.

1. General guidelines

- 1.1 An accredited assessor is expected to conduct examinations with integrity and in a credible manner.
- 1.2 An accredited assessor must conduct the examination at a suitable venue, e.g., local Council Meeting Room, Radio Club/Association, local community hall. It is a condition of accreditation that face to face examinations cannot be conducted at a private residence.
- 1.3 An accredited assessor must be impartial and unbiased. An accredited assessor must disassociate himself/herself entirely from any examination in which a candidate is a member of the accredited assessor's immediate family.
- 1.4 An accredited assessor must conduct and assess examinations on a purely voluntary basis and must not receive from any other person any fees or other compensation for any act done in relation to being an accredited assessor.
- 1.5 An accredited assessor must not charge for their services. An accredited assessor may be assisted in all tasks connected with the examination by other accredited assessors.
- 1.6 Where more than one accredited assessor is involved in an examination, one accredited assessor must be responsible overall for the preparation and proper conduct of the examination. This accredited assessor is also responsible for giving all documents that an assessor is required to give under the Accreditation Rules to the ACMA.
- 1.7 An examination can consist of 3 components:
 - 1.7.1 a practical component that must be successfully completed (in the accredited assessor's opinion) – this is only necessary when a candidate has not previously completed a practical assessment or cannot demonstrate the necessary practical experience for the level of qualification;
 - 1.7.2 a theory component. This is assessed by multiple-choice examination;
 - 1.7.3 a regulations component. This is assessed by multiple-choice examination.
- 1.8 Accredited assessors should mark all relevant parts of the candidate's examination. If a candidate has a prior domestic amateur radio qualification the assessor should consider tables 1, 2 and 3 in the Amateur Radio Qualification Framework when deciding whether the candidate needs to undertake all or part of the examination.

- 1.9 An accredited assessor must mark the candidate's examination and give all documents, including the examination paper and copies of all communications with the candidate to the ACMA.
- 1.10 An accredited assessor must not conduct a special assessment unless they hold a Specialist Assessor Accreditation. Where an assessor is conducting a special assessment, the assessor should not complete the answer sheet on the candidate's behalf. Approval should be sought from the ACMA for exemptions.

2. Conduct guidelines

- 2.1 Accredited assessors must be mindful of whether their actions would subject other licensed radio spectrum users to interference during the examination process.
- 2.2 Accredited assessors must not use their accreditation for any other purpose than to conduct and assess an amateur radio examination.
- 2.3 Accredited assessors are not representatives of the ACMA or the Australian Government and must not act in a way that gives the impression that they are.
- 2.4 Accredited assessors must be considerate of all people and any particular reasonable adjustments required for amateur radio examinations.
- 2.5 Accredited assessors must comply with any lawful and reasonable direction given by the ACMA.
- 2.6 Accredited assessors must not use their accreditation to gain, or seek to gain, a financial benefit or any form of financial reward from their accreditation.
- 2.7 Accredited assessors must act in a professional and respectful manner and comply with the law at all times.

3. Examination papers

- 3.1 An accredited assessor must not use examination materials other than those provided by the ACMA.
- 3.2 Accredited assessors will be able to generate examinations from pre-determined question pools. Accredited assessors will also be able to download the answer sheets, to assist with marking the examination, upon completion.
- 3.3 An accredited assessor must not claim compensation for the cost of printing or paper from the ACMA or the candidate for an examination.
- 3.4 Accredited assessors will be expected to give to the ACMA the examination paper completed by the candidate and the candidate's results (regardless of whether the candidate passed).
- 3.5 Accredited assessors are permitted to review the pool of questions and notify the ACMA of any issues by email to spectrumlicensingpolicy@acma.gov.au.
- 3.6 An accredited assessor must ensure that the generated examination papers are kept in a safe and secure location both before and after the examination.

- 3.7 An accredited assessor must give the ACMA all relevant examination documents and correspondence (including all copies).
- 3.8 An accredited assessor must not, at any time, interfere with, or permit alteration to, any part of an examination.
- 3.9 An accredited assessor must keep all examination questions, examination papers and related documentation confidential and must not divulge to any person, other than the ACMA or the candidate for the examination, the contents or any part of the content, or any examination paper. An accredited assessor must not at any time copy any question or any part of examination documentation, except in connection with the conduct or assessment of an examination.
- 3.10 An accredited assessor must not permit any person (including a candidate for an examination) at any time, to copy an examination paper, or any part of an examination paper or related documentation.
- 3.11 An accredited assessor must not permit any person other than a bona fide candidate to peruse or read the relevant examination paper.

4. Practical component

- 4.1 A practical component must be included in the assessment of all candidates for the foundation level qualification. If required, a practical component may be completed for candidates being assessed for Standard and Advanced level who have not previously completed a practical component.
- 4.2 A candidate can also attempt a 'stand-alone' practical component upon request. If the candidate holds a domestic amateur radio qualification, accredited assessors should consider tables 1, 2 and 3 in the Amateur Radio Qualification Framework when deciding whether the candidate will need to undertake a practical component of the examination.
- 4.3 An accredited assessor will be able to obtain the practical component from the ACMA upon request. The practical component must be conducted by the accredited assessor. The accredited assessor must be satisfied that the practical component has been conducted with integrity and the candidate has successfully completed all of the tasks in the practical assessment sheet that relate to the current syllabus.
- 4.4 The practical component may be conducted at any time the candidate and accredited assessor decide is suitable.
- 4.5 The practical component must be completed by the candidate and signed by both the candidate and the accredited assessor.
- 4.6 The practical component requirement for candidates who have previously undertaken domestic amateur radio qualifications:
 - 4.6.1 If the candidate has previously obtained a domestic amateur radio qualification as evidenced by a certificate (for example a Novice Amateur Operator's Certificate of Proficiency), the accredited assessor can make a judgment (usually through communication with the candidate), that the candidate has suitable practical operating experience. In this case, the practical assessment can be waived. The accredited assessor and candidate should sign off the practical assessment and submit this with the other examination paperwork.

- 4.6.2 If the accredited assessor concludes that the candidate does not have current competency in the practical component, then the accredited assessor must not pass the candidate unless the candidate successfully completes a practical component.
- 4.6.3 If the accredited assessor is unsure about whether a candidate needs to complete a practical component, they should contact another accredited assessor or the ACMA.

5. Resit examination

- 5.1 A resit examination is further examination undertaken by a candidate who has not been successful in a previous attempt of the same level of amateur radio qualification.
- 5.2 When downloading examination papers from the ACMA, the accredited assessor should advise the ACMA if a paper is to be used for a resit-examination.
- 5.3 The accredited assessor must provide to the ACMA the name of the candidate(s) requiring a resit examination before they undergo the re-sit examination.
- 5.4 The accredited assessor must ensure that the candidate is provided with a different examination paper from their previous attempts.

6. Special assessments

- 6.1 Special assessments can be provided to candidates who, because of a disability, or for other reasons, require reasonable adjustments to be made to the way the examination is conducted (special assessments). A special assessment can be conducted remotely via video conference or face-to-face, depending on which is appropriate.
- 6.2 Special assessments are subject to prior approval by the ACMA and may only be conducted by an accredited assessor with Specialist Assessor Accreditation (Specialist Assessor).
- 6.3 A Specialist Assessor may require a candidate to provide evidence to support their request for a special assessment.
- 6.4 The Specialist Assessor and candidate will discuss and decide on an assessment methodology that takes into consideration the candidate's needs and does not compromise the integrity of the examination.
- 6.5 The candidate of any special assessment must meet the same competency requirements as any other assessment to be awarded any certificate.
- 6.6 If necessary, a support person may be present with the candidate during the assessment. The support person must not assist the candidate in any way that may provide the candidate with an unfair advantage.
- 6.7 Depending on the method of assessment chosen, the normal time of the assessment can be extended.
- 6.8 The Specialist Assessor may decide the method of assessment, but this must not diminish the integrity of the examination.

- 6.9 The Specialist Assessor may be required by the ACMA to make a judgment and determine the competency of the candidate. If so, the Specialist Assessor must give the ACMA their opinion of the candidate's competency.
- 6.10 If the Specialist Assessor is unsure of an appropriate method of assessment, they should contact another Specialist Assessor or the ACMA for advice.
- 6.11 At the conclusion of every special assessment, the Specialist Assessor must provide a short report to the ACMA describing the method of assessment used and how this met the candidate's needs without compromising the integrity of the assessment.

7. Remote assessments

- 7.1 An accredited assessor may offer a remote assessment in particular circumstances, or the ACMA may assign a candidate to a particular accredited assessor for a remote assessment. Remote assessments are considered appropriate, when:
- 7.1.1 the nearest accredited assessor is more than 50 km away from the candidate's current location; or
 - 7.1.2 the candidate has an illness, injury, vulnerability or impairment that would not allow them to attend the assessment in person; or
 - 7.1.3 the candidate's day-to-day movements are restricted due to government public health directions.
- 7.2 The approved method for remote assessments is via video conference. Alternative methods require the approval of the ACMA.
- 7.3 The accredited assessor and candidate must use a secure and private communications method.
- 7.4 The security of the examination materials must be maintained to ensure no copying of examination materials outside the control of the accredited assessor.
- 7.5 For the purpose of conducting a remote assessment, the accredited assessor is permitted to make a copy of the electronic examination file supplied by the ACMA to enable the file to be shared electronically. The file is to have strictly read-only functionality, and the accredited assessor must take all reasonable steps to ensure the candidate cannot copy or print the examination paper. The accredited assessor must delete any copies at the end of the assessment session.
- 7.6 The accredited assessor must be sure that the candidate does not have access to information or materials that would provide them with an unfair advantage.
- 7.7 When video conferencing is not available, a remote assessment may be conducted by telephone. Assessors should obtain approval from the ACMA to conduct a remote assessment.
- 7.8 Remote assessments are permitted for candidates under the age of 18 under the following conditions:
- 7.8.1 the candidate provides an email address and phone number of the parent/guardian available to be present during the examination; and
 - 7.8.2 that parent/guardian is present in the room at all times whilst the examination is being conducted.

8. Examination preparation

- 8.1 An accredited assessor is able to obtain examination papers and relevant answer sheets from the ACMA. The accredited assessor is responsible for printing the examination papers prior to the examination taking place, for face-to-face examinations. When the examination papers are printed, they should include the date, time and location of where the examination is occurring.
- 8.2 Each examination paper, when completed, should contain the name and contact details of the candidate undertaking the examination.
- 8.3 An accredited assessor should provide a different examination paper to each candidate sitting the examination.
- 8.4 Following the completion of the examination, the accredited assessor is responsible for providing the completed examination and all other relevant documentation to the ACMA.
- 8.5 For face-to-face examinations, there should be a minimum of one accredited assessor available for every 5 candidates. It is the accredited assessor's responsibility to ensure that enough accredited assessors will be present for each examination.
- 8.6 The accredited assessor must ensure that the room to be used for the examination is of adequate size to easily seat all candidates, leaving sufficient space between candidates to ensure candidates cannot easily communicate with each other. Scheduling of examinations with other functions that may be noisy or distracting should be avoided.
- 8.7 The accredited assessor must ensure that all candidates are advised of the date, time and venue of the examination.
- 8.8 The accredited assessor must notify the candidate that they will be required to provide proof of identity before commencing the examination.

9. Immediately prior to the start of the examination

- 9.1 The accredited assessor must require each candidate to show proof of identity (a driver's licence or similar document with photograph is acceptable). The accredited assessor must ensure that the details on this document match both the appearance of the candidate and the particulars given when arranging the examination.
- 9.2 If accredited assessors are concerned about a candidate's identity, the candidate should immediately be excluded from the examination.
- 9.3 Candidates under the age of 16 are required to produce a student photo ID, passport or Medicare card.
- 9.4 Accredited assessors must advise candidates that the only material they require for completing a multiple choice examination is either a pencil and eraser or biro pen and a basic calculator (non-programmable). No other equipment is necessary or acceptable. Notes and books are not required.
- 9.5 Mobile phones must be switched off and, for face-to-face examinations, held for safe keeping by the accredited assessor.

- 9.6 Accredited assessors must ensure that examinations commence at the scheduled time. The accredited assessor may admit latecomers at their discretion but no later than 15 minutes after the commencement of the examination.
- 9.7 Accredited assessors must inform all candidates that:
- 9.7.1 the examination is a multiple-choice examination; and
 - 9.7.2 the pass mark is 70%.
- 9.8 The accredited assessor must read aloud to all candidates the 'Instructions to candidates', which the ACMA will make available to accredited assessors and candidates on its website. A copy of the 'Instructions to candidates' should be provided to each candidate along with the examination paper.
- 9.9 In the 'Instructions to candidates', the ACMA will provide an example of how the answer sheet should be filled in and how to change the answer. The accredited assessor must demonstrate to all candidates the use of the answer sheet.
- 9.10 The accredited assessor must ensure that each candidate has written their name on the examination answer sheet.
- 9.11 The accredited assessor must advise all candidates that they will assess each answer sheet after completion of the examination.
- 9.12 The accredited assessor must provide completed, marked copies of the examination materials to the ACMA. The accredited assessor must notify the candidate of their results within 10 business days of the examination.

10. During the examination

- 10.1 The accredited assessor must not leave the examination room, or for remote examinations, the online meeting, except where leaving is necessary (such as in an emergency).
- 10.2 The accredited assessor must not permit conversations between a candidate and another candidate, or between a candidate and any other person.
- 10.3 The accredited assessor must not permit candidates to leave their seats during the examination, without the assessor's permission, except in the case of an emergency. If a candidate needs to leave their seat during an examination, the accredited assessor must ensure that they do not take any examination materials with them when they do so.
- 10.4 The accredited assessor must not provide guidance or enter into discussion with any candidate concerning any examination question or answer. However, if believed necessary, the accredited assessor may provide assistance to a candidate about the use of the answer sheet.
- 10.5 The accredited assessor must not permit any candidate to copy the question paper, or any part of the question paper.
- 10.6 The accredited assessor must not permit any candidate to take the examination materials (including the question paper or any part of the question paper and any complete or incomplete answer sheets) from the examination room.

- 10.7 The accredited assessor must immediately discontinue the examination of any person believed to be unfairly influencing the outcome of the examination in any way.
- 10.8 The accredited assessor must also discontinue the examination of any person acting in collusion with another to unfairly influence the outcome of the examination. The accredited assessor must immediately remove the examination paper from such persons. The accredited assessor must make a brief written account of the matter and forward it with the relevant examination paper to the ACMA.
- 10.9 Once a candidate has completed the examination, the accredited assessor must ensure that they collect the question and answer papers from the candidate before they leave.
- 10.10 Once the examination has ended, the accredited assessor must not re-admit any candidate to the examination room once they have left that room, except for the purpose of retrieving any personal items that the candidate may have left behind.

11. On completion of the examination

- 11.1 After all candidates have completed their examination, an accredited assessor may choose to provide feedback to a candidate on particular examination questions. However, accredited assessors must ensure the integrity of the examination is upheld at all times. Copying of questions is not permitted.
- 11.2 The accredited assessor must not provide advice to the candidate concerning the likely result of their examination, until the assessment of that examination paper is complete.
- 11.3 Before leaving the examination venue, the accredited assessor must ensure that all candidates have returned all of their examination papers to the accredited assessor.
- 11.4 On completion of the examination or the practical component, the accredited assessor shall ensure that all completed examination papers are kept secured and provided to the ACMA, once marking and notification of results is finalised. The ACMA will notify the accredited assessor when this information is received and assessed, after which, the accredited assessor should destroy that material.
- 11.5 The accredited assessor must, as soon as practicable, report the loss of any part of an examination paper or examination answer sheet to the ACMA.
- 11.6 If a candidate does not attend the examination, then as soon as practicable, the accredited assessor should destroy the examination paper in question (that is, the paper that has that candidates' details).

12. Withdrawing accreditation

- 12.1 Non-compliance with these guidelines may result in withdrawal of the person's accreditation.
- 12.2 Any accredited assessor who has breached these guidelines and had their accreditation withdrawn may only be accredited again at the discretion of the ACMA. Accredited assessors who have been withdrawn will need to reapply for accreditation.

12.3 Any accredited assessor who previously breached the AMC's guidelines and/or had their registration withdrawn by the AMC may only be an accredited assessor again at the discretion of the ACMA.

12.4 Accredited assessors may request a review of the ACMA's decision to withdraw their accreditation. Requests should be made in writing, within 28 days of the accredited assessor being informed of the ACMA's decision to withdraw accreditation³, to the Manager, Spectrum Licensing Policy Section (spectrumlicensingpolicy@acma.gov.au).

13. Relevant time periods

13.1 Accredited assessors must assess a completed examination paper, and notify the candidate of their results, within 10 business days of the examination taking place.

13.2 Accredited assessors must provide all relevant documentation to the ACMA within 15 business days of the examination taking place. Relevant documentation includes:

13.2.1 all correspondence with the candidate

13.2.2 the examination completed by the candidate

13.2.3 the candidate's results.

13.3 Accredited assessors can provide the ACMA with relevant documentation by email to spectrumlicensingpolicy@acma.gov.au.

³ A decision to withdraw accreditation under section 264A of the *Radiocommunications Act 1992* is reviewable (see paragraph 285(w) of that Act). Section 288 of the Act provides that an application for reconsideration must be made within 28 days after the accredited assessor is informed of the decision, or if the ACMA extends this period, within the extended period.

Social media guidelines

Introduction

This section of the Assessor Guidelines outlines certain responsibilities of accredited assessors when using social media to make public comment in connection with their duties as accredited assessors.

As this section forms part of the Assessor Guidelines, non-adherence with this section may result in assessor accreditation being withdrawn.

What is social media?

Social media is a set of internet-based tools used for sharing and discussing information among people. Social media refers to user-generated information, opinion and other content shared and discussed over open digital networks.

Social media includes all existing and emerging electronic/digital communication applications, including but not limited to:

- > social networking sites – for example, Facebook, LinkedIn
- > video and photo sharing websites – for example, Pinterest, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube
- > enterprise tools such as Skype, Microsoft Teams and Sharepoint
- > blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs
- > micro-blogging and comment chains – for example, X (formerly Twitter), news websites
- > forums, discussion boards and groups – for example, Quora, Whirlpool, Reddit
- > wikis – for example, Wikipedia
- > VOD/streaming and podcasting – for example, Apple Podcasts, Spotify, YouTube Live, Twitch
- > email and instant messaging.

Official ACMA use of social media

The ACMA maintains separate official social media accounts that are used to communicate and engage with the public and other external stakeholders about regulatory activities and programs, and related news and educational activities. Posts on official accounts on social media sites are reserved for official communication, including to address queries and misinformation.

Official use of social media is when any user engages with external stakeholders via official ACMA social media accounts.

Accredited assessors will not have access to use any official ACMA social media accounts and should refrain from making comments on the actions of the ACMA on social media when acting in their capacity as accredited assessors.

Unofficial use of social media

When accredited assessors make public comment in an unofficial capacity, it is not appropriate for them to make comment that is, or could be reasonably perceived to be being made, on behalf of the ACMA or the Australian Government, rather than an expression of a personal view. Accredited assessors should also not make public comment about the policies and programs of the ACMA where comment is likely to compromise their ability to undertake their role in an unbiased manner.

Accredited assessors must not disclose information, without authority, which is obtained or generated in connection with their role of accredited assessor, if the information is communicated in confidence, or it is reasonably foreseeable that the disclosure of the information could be prejudicial to the effective working of government.