



Arboricultural Association

www.trees.org.uk

The treework industry standard for quality assured, compliant arboricultural contracting



ARB Approved Contractor Scheme



Version 16 – May 2016

ARB Approved Contractor Scheme



Arboricultural Association

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For five decades the Arboricultural Association (AA) has been working with arborists to establish and improve the arboricultural industry. It has become the UK's largest professional home for arborists from every background: tree surgeons (contractors), local government tree managers, tree advisors (consultants), tree growers, those in training and education and anyone else involved in arboriculture.

“ARB Approved Contractor”

Nearly 40 years ago the AA established its Approved Contractor Scheme to set the standard for tree work – an industry not regulated by government but one that cares for the largest living plants on the earth and in some of the most hostile growing environments.

The Approved Contractor Scheme has evolved over the years. In 2011 the Scheme took on some significant changes including linking the standard to business size and dovetailing it to other health and safety schemes – making it more accessible and of more value to scheme members than ever before. Further scheme developments were made in 2012 and 2013 in attaining ISO9001 (UKAS) accreditation and SSIP membership. 2014 the scheme became a TrustMark Scheme Operator and 2015 involves further developments.

This booklet tells you about the ARB Approved Contractor Scheme, how it works, the benefits to you and a summary of the technical standards against which businesses are assessed. The full set of technical standards can be found on the Association's website www.trees.org.uk/find-a-professional/Become-an-ArbAC.

In addition to running the **ARB Approved Contractor** Scheme, the AA also offers

- career-linked **membership** at various grades to reflect the Qualifications & Credits Framework
- access to **Chartered Environmentalist** status for arboriculturists who can demonstrate their commitment to working sustainably
- an accreditation scheme for tree advisors: the **AA Registered Consultant Scheme**
- **training, events, conferences** and **shows** – in fact almost anything that helps it to

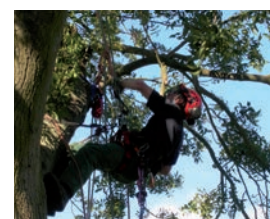
Set Standards

Promote Standards and

Enable Compliance

...in the arboricultural industry.

The main benefits of the ARB Approved Contractor Scheme are shown opposite, and the benefits of AA membership are shown on page 19.





Arboricultural Association ARB Approved Contractor Scheme

Information and Application Pack

The ARB Approved Contractor (ArbAC) Scheme is the industry standard for quality assured, compliant arboricultural contracting. The Scheme meets the stringent standards required for UKAS ISO9001:2008 Quality Management Standards certification and is a Registered Member ofSSIP (Safety Schemes in Procurement).



Now providing more opportunities for more contractors than ever before, the Scheme works for all sizes of business, from small operators working from home through to mid-sized firms and up to large companies operating from multiple sites.



For five decades the Arboricultural Association (AA) has been setting the standard for arboricultural contracting in the UK – protecting trees, protecting people and enhancing the business opportunities for ArbACs.

If you ...

- undertake good quality tree care
- look after your customers
- comply with current health and safety requirements
- work within the bounds of the law

... then the AA can offer you a tangible business advantage by awarding you ArbAC status.

The main benefits to you as a contractor are

- being able to charge a professional fee for a professional service
- access to select contracts aimed at ArbACs
- Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) points in some contracts
- a level playing field – compete with your contemporaries, not with the cowboys
- a focus for continuous improvement and investment
- access to financial discounts, especially insurance
- the use of the much recognised ArbAC logo
- 'Accredited Contractor' with CHAS (Contractors Health and Safety Assessment Scheme)
- 'Licenced Contractor' with TrustMark (Government Endorsed Scheme)
- peace of mind, knowing you have achieved the industry standard
- member discount on AA training (even if not an AA member)
- a listing on the AA's "Find a Tree Surgeon" website Directory.



The benefits to trees

Trees are living, dynamic organisms that need appropriate management and care to ensure their safety, longevity and continued contribution to the landscape. As an ArbAC you will be required to demonstrate a good understanding of tree biology and the effects of management.

The benefits to tree owners

Quality assured tree care services from contractors assessed and approved by the nation's largest representative arboricultural body bring security to tree owners and managers in an industry renowned for more than its fair share of unscrupulous contractors. Tree owners can rely on ArbACs for appropriate advice and services and rest assured insurances and qualifications are in place.

Plus, in the unlikely event they are unhappy with your services, they can bring the matter to us for consideration and resolution.

An achievable standard

The ArbAC Scheme sets a standard that is achievable by all good tree work contractors. See our Frequently Asked Questions section (page 17) to de-bunk various myths about the Scheme.



SECTION 1: The ARB Approved Contractor Scheme – a brief summary

An ArbAC is a business that has been assessed by the AA, has met and continues to uphold the AA's standards (both the ArbAC Standard relevant to the size of the business and the AA's Codes of Ethics and Professional Conduct), has paid the appropriate annual scheme management fee and has agreed to comply with the rules and procedures of the scheme as outlined in this booklet.

1.1 Standards

The Scheme Standards are described in section 2 (page 6). The Standards are broken down into four broad headings or modules, as follows:

Module 1: Worksite Safety Inspection

Module 2: Work Quality Inspections and Arboricultural Knowledge

Module 3: Customer Care and Office Procedures etc.

Module 4: Health & Safety Management and Workplace Inspection

The content of each module varies according to the size of the business: the Standard for small businesses contains fewer criteria than the Standard for larger businesses. Further details can be found in section 2. The Scheme Standards do not include any assessment of 'tree reports' because the provision of advice or opinion (other than that involved in the preparation of quotations) is excluded from the ArbAC Scheme.

1.2 Assessment

The assessment process is described in section 3 (page 8). Contractors achieving ArbAC status are reassessed regularly. The process and cost of assessment and reassessment are linked to business size. Further details can be found in section 3. (Whilst all aspects of the assessment standards are important the scheme places particular emphasis on Modules 1 & 2 because those are its origins.)

Who can become an ArbAC? Are you eligible?

Most tree work businesses are eligible to apply for ArbAC status. You don't have to be big, you don't need specific qualifications and it doesn't cost the earth. In the following pages you will find the Scheme rules and procedures. **If you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to contact us.**

ArbAC status is awarded to many different types and sizes of business undertaking tree work. To apply to become an ArbAC your business must meet *all* of the following criteria:

1. comprise a minimum of two people (which may be a sole trader and a sub-contract labourer). There is no maximum size
2. undertake most of its work with its own staff (whether employed or self-employed). Note: subcontracting work to other businesses is acceptable so long as the majority of work is undertaken in house
3. have a competent Manager(s) (see Standards, page 6)
4. have appropriate insurance (see Standards, page 6)
5. have been trading for a minimum of two years

The underlying values of the Scheme are:

- good quality tree care
- good customer care
- compliance with current health and safety requirements
- compliance with the law

A great deal of importance is placed on the person (or persons) who control the tree work business ('the Manager(s)') whom the AA holds responsible for the control of standards, all employed staff and subcontract labour, the control of subcontractors and the operation of the business in general. Additionally, but not necessarily exclusively, that person is also responsible for ensuring compliance with the scheme rules at all times.

NB Non compliance with the scheme rules, eg not renewing membership of the scheme by 1st January of the current year or not presenting for a reassessment on a set date. may result in removal of business details from the AA "Find a Tree Surgeon" web directory and/or removal from the scheme.



1.3 When you become an ArbAC

1. You will be promoted by the AA on the 'Find a Tree Surgeon' section of its website, www.trees.org.uk, its responses to customer enquiries and in the trade and general press through press releases and comment.
2. You will be permitted to use the much recognised ArbAC logo and are encouraged to do so actively.
3. You will be promoted by many organisations and public bodies who recognise the significance of the Standard.

1.4 Are you ready?

Before you request an assessment, there are easy ways to find out if your business is ready:

- attend an ArbAC preparation workshop (highly recommended)
- ask the AA for a pre-assessment visit

These options could help you find out more and may save you from the costs of a premature application and possible revisit. However, whilst strongly recommended, they are not obligatory and you can apply for assessment at any time.

Contact us for current 'lead in' periods for assessments.

Check out the AA's training and publications resources
to help you meet the standard – see www.trees.org.uk

SECTION 2: The Standard

In essence the standard is good quality tree work undertaken safely and legally with good customer care.

2.1 Business size

The ArbAC Scheme recognises that the requirements for health and safety management, and compliance, vary for different sizes of business. (The AA requires all businesses, irrespective of size, to operate safely and within the law.) Taking the health and safety policy as an example: for a business fewer than 5 employees the requirements can be met with a basic policy (see website www.trees.org.uk/publications/help-for-arborists for template examples), for those 5 or more employees, a detailed policy will be required. Practical examples of how this works are provided in the box below.

As a consequence there are two different technical standards – one that applies to businesses fewer than 5 employees and one that applies to businesses of 5 or more employees. The table on page 7 highlights the difference between the two standards. To access the full detail of the technical standards see www.trees.org.uk/find-a-professional/Become-an-ArbAC. To see which set of standards applies to your business you need to determine your business size as either:

- (i) less than 5 employees in the business, or
- (ii) 5 or more employees in the business (including larger businesses and across multi-sites)

Business size is determined by the number of people who work in your business, **including yourself (the employer)**.

In working out your business size you need to add up the number of people working in the business, full time and part time, including:

- yourself (the employer)
- employed arborists/grounds persons
- self-employed labour-only arborists/grounds persons
- employed or self-employed administrators/office staff
- anyone else who is part of your business, e.g. mechanic, sawmill operator, timber truck driver
(Do not include people to whom you subcontract work such as other arboricultural businesses.)

Where an applicant is an arboricultural team of 'fewer than 5' but is part of a larger organisation (e.g. a local authority, a facilities management or other multi-disciplinary or multi-site business) the applicant will be considered and assessed as a '5 or more employees' business recognising the support network and additional people contributing elsewhere in the business.

Examples of how the standards differ for businesses fewer than 5 and businesses 5 or more (in all cases please see full details in the relevant standard)

Section 4.1 Health & Safety Management:

- **BASIC:** Basic level H&S documentation available to include policy, risk assessments, CoSHH assessments, training records etc. (see AA website for download documents) and a basic understanding of H&S management and employers duties.
- **DETAILED:** As 'BASIC' (above) plus an integrated H&S management system, including documented policies and procedures relevant to business size, client sectors and operational complexity. A nominated 'H&S competent person', can be the employer or manager, must have a good understanding of H&S management and the duties and responsibilities of employers, employees and sub-contractors.
NOTE: those businesses with 5 or more employees, but fewer than (eg) 10, will not be expected to demonstrate the same level of H&S documentation and knowledge as those of larger sized businesses (eg 15 people).

Section 4.5 Workshop:

- **BASIC:** basic workshop facilities, i.e. domestic garage or container ('lock up'), to enable simple machinery and equipment repairs and maintenance to be undertaken. This will also include a check of fuel storage arrangements, ie combi-cans/jerry cans/fuel tank(s), as applicable, and a general premises check for safety and basic welfare arrangements.
- **DETAILED:** as 'BASIC' (above) plus a more appropriate workshop facility dependent upon business size, machinery and equipment levels. A more detailed premises check will be undertaken including fire precautions, signage and escape routes etc, electrical compliance certification (if appropriate) and adequate welfare facilities. Fuel storage arrangements will be checked including fire risk assessment and 'DSEAR' (Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regs.) assessment where applicable.
NOTE: those businesses with 5 or more employees, but fewer than (eg) 10, will not be expected to have the same size/level of facility for machinery etc maintenance and storage as that of a larger sized business (eg 15 people).

2.2 Insurance

Applicant businesses and ArbACs must hold as a minimum:

1. Public Liability £5 million (minimum) for each and every claim
2. Employers' Liability to an appropriate level commensurate with the size of the business (usually £10 million)
3. Motor Vehicle – suitable to the business use and drivers

The type of cover in each area must be applicable to tree work business and must not include any unreasonable exclusion clauses (an unreasonable clause would be, for example, no work more than 15m above ground level, or no felling of trees greater than 20m in height etc).

2.3 Manager(s) Criteria

1. Dependent upon size, businesses have the opportunity to nominate up to to 4 managers.
2. The Manager(s) should have arboricultural knowledge to at least QCF level 2¹ and is capable of controlling a business and staff and upholding the standards.
3. The Manager(s) should have at least five years' experience in arboricultural contracting.
4. The Manager(s) may be a Director, a sole trader, an employer, an employee, a partner or any combination.

2.4 Technical Standards Summary

A full schedule of the Technical Standards required can be found on the AA's website (see www.trees.org.uk/find-a-professional/Become-an-ArbAC). The following table is a summary outlining the areas included in the assessment, dependent on business size.

Module	Section	Business size up to 5 👤👤👤👤👤	Business size more than 5 👤👤👤👤👤 +
Module 1 Worksite Safety Inspection	1.1 On site operation	✓	✓
Module 2 Work Quality Inspections and Arb Knowledge	2.1 Completed works (pruning and planting)	✓	✓
	2.2 Arboricultural knowledge	✓	✓
	2.3 Reference material	✓	✓
Module 3 Customer Care and Office Procedures etc.	3.1 Customer care and office systems	Basic ✓ Detailed ✗	✓ ✓
	3.2 Insurances	✓	✓
	3.3 Licences	✓	✓
	3.4 Wildlife and ecology	✓	✓
Module 4 Health & Safety Management and Workplace Inspection etc.	4.1 Health and safety management	Basic ✓ Detailed ✗	✓ ✓
	4.2 Health and safety communications and controls	✗	Up to 19 20+ and multi-site ✗ ✓
	4.3 Training and competence	✓	✓
	4.4 Environmental policy	Basic ✓ Detailed ✗	✓ ✓
	4.5 Workshop	Basic ✓ Detailed ✗	✓ ✓
	4.6 Yard (if you have one)	Basic ✓ Detailed ✗	✓ ✓

Table 1. Technical Standards summary outlining the areas included in the assessment, dependent on business size.

¹ eg to a level of the RFS Certificate in Arboriculture or the ISA Certified Arborist – but no actual qualification is required

SECTION 3: Assessments

To become an ArbAC you will need to be assessed by the AA, and once you have achieved ArbAC status you will need to be reassessed regularly. Following your application we will:

- agree an assessment date with you
- send one or more² assessors to undertake the assessment and measure your compliance with the Standard.

3.1 Assessments

AA assessors are briefed to be friendly and helpful and will give detailed advice and guidance where required. The assessment process is not designed to catch you out but to be beneficial to you and your business – even if you don't become an ArbAC. Assessors may even provide advice on items that are not covered by the assessment criteria – either verbally on the day or as an advisory note in the written report – if they think this would be helpful to you. Even though this will not affect the assessment outcome the assessors are here to help you wherever they can. (However, they cannot become a formal advisor/H&S consultant to the business during the assessment process as this would be deemed a 'conflict of interest'.)

The assessment criteria are broken down into modules. It is possible to assess all modules in one day or to spread the modules over 12 months. Spreading out the modules will increase the cost as multiple visits will be required. However, some small businesses elect to complete the assessment over 2 consecutive days (see p.18, note 4).

Upon successful completion of the assessment with Full approval achieved you can also access the CHAS (Contractors Health and Safety Assessment Scheme), and TrustMark Scheme (see below).



The ArbAC Scheme is recognised as being CHAS compliant. That means that CHAS accreditation is available to contractors who meet current ArbAC Scheme standards. Applicants who are successful at their ArbAC assessment can be registered with CHAS, and CHAS Accredited Contractor is achieved with no further audit required (an additional £60+VAT CHAS annual licence fee will be incurred). Maintenance of CHAS accreditation is automatically achieved by maintaining your ArbAC status and undertaking annual H&S audits with the AA by a combination of document submission and assessments – see 'The reassessment cycle', page 10.



ArbAC status also gives access to the TrustMark Scheme to help secure business in the domestic tree work sector. Applicants who are successful at their ArbAC assessment can be registered with TrustMark, and TrustMark Registered Firm is achieved with no further audit required (an additional £40 + VAT TrustMark annual licence fee plus a 'one-off' administration fee of £20 + VAT will be incurred). Maintenance of TrustMark accreditation is automatically achieved by maintaining your ArbAC status and undertaking annual renewals with the AA by a combination of document submissions and assessments – see "Tree reassessment cycle", page 10.

3.2 Assessment duration

This depends on the size of the business and the number of assessors involved

Business Size:

1–5 people = 1 x assessor day 6–9 people = 1.5 x assessor days 10–19 people = 2 x assessor days
20–49 people = 3 x assessor days 50+ people = 4 x assessor days

This may involve multiple assessors for fewer days.

3.3 The first assessment

After the AA receives an application and payment for an ArbAC assessment the procedure is as follows:

1. The application form (see AA website) and associated documents will be reviewed.
2. The applicant's payment will be processed.
3. The applicant's insurance questionnaire (see AA website) and policy will be assessed to ensure that they provide adequate and appropriate cover and do not include any unreasonable exclusion causes. Any inadequacies must be corrected before the application can proceed.
4. The applicant's references, ideally including at least one from a local authority, will be taken up.
5. An assessment date will be arranged to the mutual convenience of the applicant and the AA. It is advisable to expect the assessment date to be some six to eight weeks from the date of application.

² Depending on the size of your business

6. On the assessment day(s) the assessor(s) will measure compliance with the Standard. This will necessitate access to:
- the applicant's office systems and paperwork
 - the applicant's stores, workshop and, if there is one, yard
 - sites of work completed by the applicant, including tree planting, crown reduction and crown thinning
 - work in progress at a 'live' site. This must include a demonstration of rigging competence (ideally as part of a sectional felling operation).

Working through the Standard will enable the arboricultural, business management and health and safety competencies of the Manager(s) to be assessed.

7. At the end of the assessment day the assessor(s) will inform the contractor of his recommendation (to the AA) on the outcome of the assessment and subsequently issue a report to the applicant. In most instances this report will be issued within 10 working days.

3.4 The outcome of first assessment

The following are the possible outcomes:

- FULL APPROVAL
- PENDING APPROVAL (minor – major – revisit)
- FAIL

These outcomes and where necessary the further steps and assessment costs needed to obtain ArbAC status are summarised in table 2 (below)

Assessment outcome	Entitlements	Timescales for rectifications	Cost for further assessment (+VAT)
1. FULL APPROVAL ArbAC status is awarded as a result of full compliance with the Standard and no further action is required.	Manager's identification card(s), sample vehicle livery, Directory entry on website and an electronic copy of the ArbAC logo for marketing purposes. Entitlement lasts for 4 years (assuming approval at assessment 2 years on from initial assessment) <i>Additionally access to TrustMark and CHAS Schemes is available</i>	N/A	N/A
2. PENDING APPROVAL (a) minor issues (b) major issues (c) revisit (partial criteria) ArbAC status is deferred because of non-compliance until the issues are rectified by either submission of documents or by a further assessment visit. If a further assessment visit is required it is normally restricted to the assessment of areas of the Standard deemed not compliant.	Open dialogue with ArbAC scheme manager/appointed Lead assessor and AA website resource	(a) Submission (minor) up to 3 months, OR (b) Submission (major) 3-6 months, OR (c) Revisit (partial criteria) within 3-6-9 months	(a) £90 (b) £250, OR (c) £520 per assessor per day will apply
3. FAIL ArbAC status is declined because of significant failings. A further assessment visit will be required, normally covering the full Standard.	Open dialogue with ArbAC scheme manager and AA website resource	N/A (advisory may be given)	Full assessment fee at re-application

Table 2. The outcomes and further actions following initial assessment

3.5 Maintaining ArbAC status

Once ArbAC status has been achieved, the process for maintaining it is as follows:

1. payment of the annual scheme management fee when due and make the necessary submissions³
2. maintain compliance with the Standard (see page 6)
3. payment of the relevant reassessment fees when due (see below and fee structure page 18)
4. pass the ArbAC reassessment.
5. Adherence to the scheme rules and requirements as set out in this booklet.

3.6 The reassessment cycle

In order to ensure the standards of ArbACs are maintained, ArbACs are reassessed on a regular cycle. The nature of the reassessment depends on the size of the business and whether it is registered with CHAS through the AA.

		Small Businesses		Larger business (10 or more employees)			
Business size ⁴ no. assessor days and assessment type		upto 5 people ■■■■■	6-9 people ■■■■■ +	10-19 people ■■■■■ ■■■■■ +	20-49 people ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ +	50-50+ people ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ +	Multi-site ■■■■■ ■■■■■
Cycle 1	Year 1	Full assessment 1 assessor	Full assessment 1.5 assessors	Full assessment 2 assessors	Full assessment 3 assessors	Full assessment 4 assessors	Full assessment TBA assessor(s)
	Year 2	Desktop H&S audit only ⁵ (required for SSiP and CHAS + TrustMark)					
	Year 3	Interim assessment 1 assessor*	Interim assessment 1 assessor	Interim assessment 1.5 assessors	Interim assessment 2 assessors	Interim assessment 3 assessors	Interim assessment TBA assessor(s)
	Year 4	Desktop H&S audit only ⁵ (required for SSiP and CHAS + TrustMark)					
Cycle 2	Year 1	Full reassessment 1 assessor	Full reassessment 1.5 assessors	Full reassessment 2 assessors	Full reassessment 3 assessors	Full reassessment 4 assessors	Full reassessment TBA assessor(s)

*This part-criteria assessment is not expected to take a full day

**0.5 day will be 'desktop document' appraisal prior to the assessment visit

Table 3: The reassessment cycle

The four-year reassessment cycle can be summarised in the following diagram:

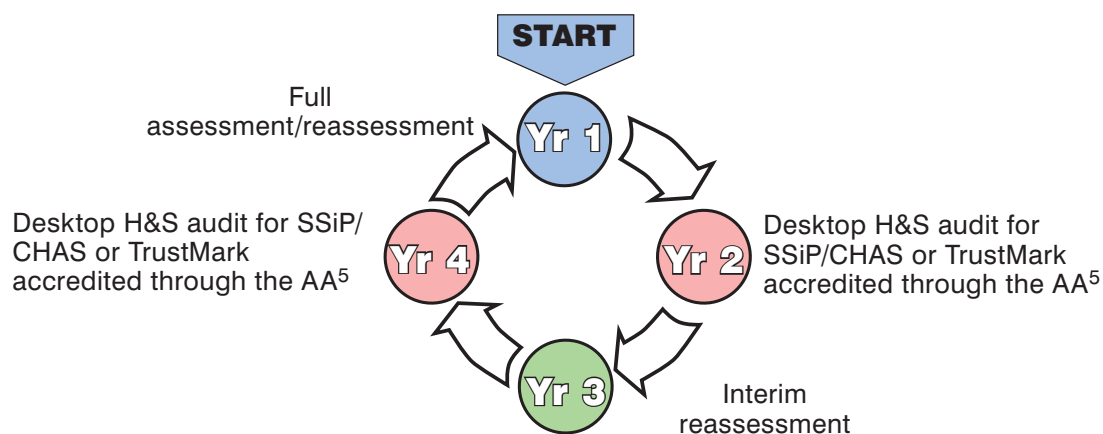


Figure 1: The four-year reassessment cycle

³ Insurance documents, health and safety policy statement and declarations of compliance with scheme standard. TrustMark – business Ts&Cs

⁴ See Guidance in Section 2 (page 6).

⁵ If you choose to maintain CHAS accreditation through the AA you will be required to undergo a desktop health and safety assessment at 1 year on and 3 years on from assessment. If you required TrustMark ONLY, maintenance of which will be incorporated into your ArbAC annual renewal.



The AA will arrange your reassessment dates to take place one month prior to the “anniversary” of your initial approval/previous re-approval and these are normally non-negotiable, other than in exceptional circumstances. Your ArbAC compliance certificate will also expire on this date.

Reassessment may be required before the dates determined by the above cycle. The grounds for an early reassessment are:

1. change in the Manager(s)⁶ may require a reassessment
2. change in business location⁷ may require a reassessment
3. an upheld complaint against the ArbAC may require reassessment, depending on the circumstances
4. changes of business ownership, business name or other significant change to the business that could affect client satisfaction will also trigger reassessment or new application/assessment. The Scheme Manager will decide whether reassessment or new application/assessment is required and may liaise with the Arboricultural Association's Professional Committee for guidance.

If a reassessment is triggered by any of the above the ArbAC will be liable for reassessment fees. The fees will be charged at the day rate shown for Pre-assessment visits (see section on Fee Structure, page 18) and the number of days or part days will depend on the extent of the reassessment.

In addition to the above the AA reserves the right to reassess ArbACs for their compliance with the Standard at any time. No reassessment fee will be charged for reassessment in such circumstances.

3.7 The reassessment process

Four years on from the initial achievement of ArbAC status the cycle starts again including the interim reassessment 2 years on. The reassessment process is the same as for the first assessment except:

1. no application form is required
2. you will be invoiced for your reassessment and your invoice must be paid prior to the reassessment
3. no insurance questionnaire needs to be completed (as the AA holds your insurance record on file and updates it annually)
4. references are not required
5. you will automatically be notified of the reassessment date well in advance.

3.8 The outcome of reassessment

The following are the possible outcomes:

1. FULL RE-APPROVAL
2. PROVISIONAL RE-APPROVAL
3. FAIL

These outcomes are shown in more detail in Table 4, page 12.

⁶ If (a) the only Manager moves on or (b) if both of two Managers move on or (c) to add a Manager to the business

⁷ Any change that affects the operation of the business – such as stores, yard or depot. Movement of an administration base without moving operational areas will not normally require reassessment.

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Reassessment outcome	Entitlements	Timescales	Cost (+VAT)
1. FULL RE-APPROVAL ArbAC status is maintained as a result of full compliance with the Standards	Manager's identification card(s), sample vehicle livery, Directory entry on website and an electronic copy of the ArbAC logo for marketing purposes. Entitlement lasts for 4 years (assuming approval at assessment 2 years on from initial assessment). Access to CHAS or TrustMark	N/A	N/A
2. PROVISIONAL RE-APPROVAL ArbAC status is maintained for a time period (usually 3–6 months) whilst issues of non-compliance are rectified. Failure to demonstrate that these areas have been rectified within the time period will result in ArbAC status being withdrawn. ArbAC status will only be reinstated when compliance with the Standard is demonstrated, either as a result of submission of evidence relating to non-compliant criteria or by a full reassessment, whichever is determined appropriate by the scheme manager.	Manager's identification card(s), sample vehicle livery, Directory entry on website and an electronic copy of the ArbAC logo for marketing purposes. Entitlement lasts until expiry of 'due date' for additional submissions	(a) Submission (minor) within 3 months (b) Submission (major) 3-6 months, OR (c) Revisit (partial criteria) within 3-6-9 months	(a) £90 (b) £250, OR (c) £520 per assessor per day will apply
3. FAIL ArbAC status is withdrawn because of major non-compliance. ArbAC status will only be reinstated when compliance with the Standard is demonstrated, either as a result of submission of evidence relating to non-compliant criteria or by a full reassessment, whichever is determined appropriate by the Scheme manager.	Open dialogue with ArbAC Scheme manager/appointed Lead assessor and AA website resource	N/A (advisory may be given)	Full assessment fee at re-application

Table 4. The outcomes and further actions following reassessment

SECTION 4: Summary of outcomes following first assessment or reassessment

4.1 What happens if approval is not granted?

1. At first assessment

The consequence of non-compliance depends on the extent

- Non-compliance will result in ArbAC status being deferred until evidence of compliance is submitted and approved[†] within a given time period.
- Major non-compliance or fail will result in ArbAC status being withheld until an assessment at a later date[‡] demonstrates compliance.

2. At reassessment

- Non-compliance will result in ArbAC status being maintained for a limited period whilst evidence of compliance is submitted and approved.[†]
- Major non-compliance may result in ArbAC status being withdrawn either immediately or at the end of the year, and it will not be reinstated until an assessment at a later date[‡] demonstrates compliance.
- Fail will result in ArbAC status being withdrawn.

In all the above circumstances it is the job of the ArbAC scheme lead assessor to determine the degree of seriousness of the non-compliance. The factors that will normally be used to determine this will be the impact of the non-compliance on safety, tree health and customer experience.

A right of appeal exists for applicants aggrieved at the decision. Appeals will be heard by the AA's Professional Committee but this may be delegated to the scheme manager in the first instance.

[†] Evidence of compliance is normally submitted by post or email (eg supplying a copy of a NPTC certificate or a photograph of a more suitable oil storage facility). It does not normally require an assessor to visit the business.

[‡] Evidence of compliance can only be assessed by an assessor visiting the business.

4.2 When approval is granted

The AA will be keen to promote your ArbAC status as soon as it can. Upon payment of the appropriate proportion of the Scheme management fee (see Fee Structure, page 18) the AA will add your business details to the AA website Directory and will refer local clients to you when contacted.

Advertising on the web in the region where the ArbAC business resides (the "main address") is included in the Scheme management fee. Advertising in additional regions of the Directory is possible by the payment of the "additional region" fees (see Fee Structure, page 18). Additional region advertising will advertise the ArbAC name and main address.

SECTION 5: Complaints against ArbACs

Complaints will normally only be accepted from clients of the ArbAC and when the complainant and the ArbAC have exhausted all reasonable steps to resolve the complaint between themselves. Complaints from non-clients will only be accepted at the discretion of the Chairman of the AA's Professional Committee unless from a Local Authority Tree Officer, for example, or other deemed 'appropriate person' when the scheme manager may choose to intervene.

5.1 Procedure

If the complaint relates to standards of work this will normally be assessed by the ArbAC Scheme manager or lead assessor(s) who will measure the ArbAC's work against

1. the Standard normally accepted for inclusion with in the Scheme
2. the client's instructions and contractor's written specification
3. any applications, notifications, consents, licences and conditions under any relevant Acts or regulations.

Where it is considered that the work falls short of an acceptable standard, the ArbAC will be required to rectify the work (if possible) and/or may be required to submit to reassessment within a reasonable time period. The Scheme manager or lead assessor(s) may refer to Professional Committee for guidance.

If the complaint relates to an alleged breach(es) of the Code of Ethics and/or Code of Professional Conduct (see sect. 5.2) by a Manager(s) or someone under their control, the AA's procedure for assessing such breaches will be implemented as published on the AA's website.

Note: The AA cannot impose a financial penalty on the ArbAC but reserves the right to withdraw their status. The AA reserves the right to undertake unannounced visits for the purposes of checking compliance and standards.



5.2 Code of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct

Code of Ethics

Every member shall uphold the integrity of the profession

Every member shall strive for increasing an objective knowledge of trees and of arboriculture in all their contexts and apply this knowledge to the benefit of society

Every member shall endeavour to promote public understanding of trees and arboriculture and to increase the public regard for the profession

Every member shall practise his or her profession with due regard to sound ecological, social, economic and environmental principles to the advantage of present and future generations

Every member shall perform only those services which are within the member's competence

Code of Professional Conduct

A member shall not voluntarily disclose any confidential information

Unless a member has previously obtained in writing the permission of the relevant client or employer, a member shall not be engaged by, not have an interest in nor accept remuneration from any other business or principals which may give rise to any conflict with the interests of the member's said client or employer

A member shall only act for more than one party in any transaction if all parties agree in advance in writing

A member acting for a client shall inform the client in advance in writing of any other interest the member may have in any activities undertaken on behalf of the client

A member shall not, by unfair or unprofessional means, do anything that could harm the business or prospects of a fellow member

A member shall not knowingly investigate the professional competence of another member without the knowledge of that member

A member shall be scrupulous in acknowledging the help obtained from others

A member shall ensure that advertisements and other public announcements placed or made by the member are fair and accurate and are not such as could reasonably be seen to bring the Association or the profession into disrepute

Advertisements and other public announcements relating to the scope or nature of the services to be provided by a member shall not contain any material which compares the member's services with the services offered or provided by any other member or members

The assistance of the Institute of Chartered Foresters in the development of these Codes is acknowledged and appreciated.



ARB Approved Contractors win more business – but are you getting your share?

Paul Smith, Technical Officer at the AA, probably puts in more motorway miles than any other member of staff as he gets around the country running contractor workshops, training and assessments for the ArbAC scheme.

One of the first questions Paul is asked when he meets people out and about is how to put a value on joining the ArbAC scheme, so he's put together some of the key reasons that prospective ARB Approved Contractors should consider:

ARB Approved Contractors:

- Win more business than non-approved companies (Arboricultural Association Survey Result 2014).
- Get access to contracts that require professional accreditation.
- Can charge a professional fee for their professional services.
- Benefit from Scheme Member discounts on AA training.
- Get a listing in the AA's national 'Find a Tree Surgeon' online directory.
- Can use the Approved Contractor logo.

- Have access to CHAS (www.chas.co.uk) and TrustMark (www.trustmark.org.uk) schemes.

Paul adds another idea:

'Here are 10 top tips for getting ARB Approved – I've been doing the job for nearly 10 years now, so I reckon if you follow the list we can really work well together to bring in a successful application.'

1. Look on the website and check out the brochure.
2. Get to a workshop and ask lots of questions.
3. Review the standards and identify the gaps.
4. Ensure your training and skills are up to date.
5. Present a 'live' worksite involving good rigging.
6. Present a range of high standard tree planting and pruning.
7. Make sure your arb knowledge is good and up to date.
8. Plan the day carefully and prepare well in advance.

9. Lay out your paperwork for ease of reference.

10. Relax ... and put the kettle on ☺.

Want to know more?

How about signing up for a FREE ARB Approved Contractor Workshop in your area?

You'll get to understand the scheme requirements and how to prepare for a successful assessment. Just go to www.trees.org.uk/Training for a list of dates and locations (more dates are being added shortly for 2015) or register an interest at arbac@trees.org.uk.

If you would like to talk in more detail, please contact Paul Smith on paul@trees.org.uk or tel. 01242 522152.

Just want a bit more detail about what the scheme can do for you? Go to www.trees.org.uk/find-a-professional/Become-an-ArbAC.

Arboricultural Association Survey: Winter 2013–14

- **AA Approved Contractors received nearly 20% more call-outs than non-approved operators. (344 contractors surveyed)**
- **Over 60% of respondents felt the winter storm damage was the worst for over a decade.**

TrustMark nurtures its tree surgeons

TrustMark, the Government-endorsed quality mark for tradesmen, has seen a huge surge in tree surgeons joining the scheme, with a fourfold increase (303%) in just six months. Over 127,000 search results were provided to homeowners looking for expert and local TrustMark tree surgeons across the UK in 2014.

A key contributor to this growth in trade is the AA, which was awarded scheme operator status for TrustMark in April 2014. The Association has grown its ARB Approved TrustMark membership to over 120 contractors and is set to continue this expansion over the coming months.



Simon Ayers, Chief Executive of TrustMark, said: 'Tree surgery is a specialist trade and the danger to people and property is very high if tree surgeons do not have the appropriate training, experience and equipment. Thankfully more and more homeowners are now realising the importance of using quality and reputable contractors and are seeking out ARB Approved TrustMark contractors. We are delighted to see such

high figures of contractors both joining the scheme and homeowners who are searching for TrustMark registered tree surgeons, rather than looking on any 'find a trader' websites, which carry out little or no checks on the firms they are listing.'

Paul Smith, AA Technical Officer, said, 'It is a mark of the professionalism of ARB Approved contractors that they have taken up the TrustMark scheme in such numbers. The Association is continually driving the message home that tree surgery is complex and potentially dangerous – consumers need to be able to find competent professionals quickly and easily – the TrustMark scheme provides an unbeatable service in this respect.'

To stay up-to-date with developments at TrustMark, visit www.trustmark.org.uk.

ARB Approved Contractor Scheme



Acer Tree Services – new ArbAC

Jonathan Brandt, proprietor of Acer Tree Services, is delighted to have his business awarded the highly acclaimed ArbAC accreditation.

Jonathan (Joe) has worked in the industry for 31 years and started Acer Tree Services in 1990. He said, 'The business has been steadily growing over a period of years in both private and commercial sectors and I have a very strong and highly competent team who combine experience and attention to detail with vigour and skill.

'The assessment day consisted of a full and very thorough inspection of every single aspect of the business and was most professionally carried out by Paul Smith.

'I am very proud of all of my team and what we have achieved together; we are

all looking forward to an exciting and hardworking future!'



Thompson Tree Services – new ArbAC

Jack Thompson said, 'I feel Thompson Tree Services has built a good reputation in our area but the ARB Approved status qualifies us to promote the company as having reached the highest standards in arboriculture.

'This accreditation will hopefully open doors to gaining new contacts; any expansion will be underpinned by the same high quality tree work, safety and customer care that we are so proud of.

'The challenge of being so thoroughly tested was daunting but everyone's hard work and dedication has paid off – thank you to all the team. The positive comments from Paul Smith and Simon Cox on the

day were the icing on the cake – we thank them for their professional comments and practical advice. We look forward to any

future support for the business and our continued professional development from the AA.'



RHS Wisley arborists – new ArbAC

The five-strong arborist team based at RHS Wisley has been provisionally awarded ArbAC status by the Arboricultural Association. Led by Tobin Layton, the team is responsible for the Wisley garden and a number of other RHS sites, in particular Harlow Carr in Harrogate.

Tobin commented on the team's achievement, 'We are delighted to have achieved ArbAC status – the team worked

hard to prepare for our assessment and this is recognition of our goal of raising standards across the organisation. The application process has also confirmed that we can benchmark our operations against the best in the industry.'

RHS Wisley's arborist team have been awarded AA ArbAC status. Congratulations to them all! Left to right: Ed Dillon, Matt Hanley, Chris Cadd and Tobin Layton. The fifth team member (not pictured) is Matt Coates.





FAQs and common misconceptions

- 1. Do I, or the business, have to be an AA member to become an ArbAC?**
No. You will receive many benefits from AA membership but this is not an essential requirement.
- 2. How long does an ArbAC 'licence' last?**
Four years, provided that you comply with the requirements of the scheme during that period (which include maintaining the Standard, paying an annual subscription, making annual paperwork submissions or declarations and being successful at the interim assessment after two years).
- 3. What is checked at the 'interim' assessments?**
Interim assessments (two years after full assessment) check the full Standard but focus on outcomes rather than the detail of procedures and systems.
- 4. What academic qualifications do I need to become an ArbAC?**
None, but attainment of an arb specific qualification is encouraged. See further information in the section *Manager(s) Criteria*, page 7.
- 5. Can an ArbAC use sub contractors?**
Yes, so long as the majority of the ArbAC's work is undertaken "in house".
- 6. Am I too small to be an ArbAC?**
The minimum size is two people (which may be one person and a sub-contract labourer), i.e. a sole-trader/partnership.
- 7. I don't have a yard or workshop. Is this a problem?**
You do not have to have a yard or workshop. Some small businesses operate from a home-office with vehicles kept on the driveway and tools and equipment kept in the garage. This is perfectly acceptable.
- 8. Do I need "aerial tree rigging" qualification (formerly CS41)?**
Generally the answer is yes, if you undertake sectional felling operations involving the use of rigging equipment. It is unlikely that all operatives in the business will need this certificate of competence but at least one person will need it.
- 9. Do I get CHAS⁸ accreditation with ArbAC?**
The health and safety elements of the ArbAC scheme are CHAS compliant. By becoming an ArbAC we will automatically register you with CHAS (unless you tell us not to). Thereafter, for a small administration fee, you can attain CHAS for 'Accredited Contractor' status (no further assessment is required at this stage).
- 10. I am already CHAS accredited, will that affect my ArbAC assessment (can I omit the H&S parts of the assessment)?**
No, the AA still needs to satisfy itself that the business is H&S compliant in a treework context, but will focus on the 'on-site' paperwork, i.e. risk assessments, method statements, emergency procedures.
- 11. Can I object to a particular assessor undertaking the assessment?**
Yes, but you will have to explain your reasons. The Scheme Manager will look at your reasons and provided he considers them to be reasonable (normally a possible conflict of interest), alternative assessor(s) will be found. The Scheme Manager may refer to the AA Professional Committee for guidance.
- 12. If I am not successful at assessment can I appeal?**
A right of appeal exists for applicants aggrieved at the decision – see page 13 for further details. But do bear in mind that a full explanation of any areas found not compliant/competent will be provided by the Lead Assessor and advice will be offered on how best to rectify these.

⁸ The Contractors Health and Safety Assessment Scheme.

Fee Structure 1st January 2016 to 31st December 2016

1. Pre-assessment visit by the AA (optional) = (£520 +VAT) £624.00 per day for ALL businesses

2. Assessment and reassessment fees (Table 5)

	Small business		Medium business	Larger businesses		
Business size ⁹ → and assessment type ↓	1-5 people (1x assr day)	6-9 people (1.5x assr days)	10-19 people (2x assr days)	20-49 people (3x assr days)	≥50 people (4x assr days)	Multi-site (?x assr days)
Year 1 (initial assessment or FULL reassessment)*	(£495+VAT) £594.00	(£775+VAT) £930.00	(£1,080+VAT) £1,296.00	(£1,500+VAT) £1,800.00	(£1,950+VAT) £2,340.00	TBA
Year 2 Desktop Audit (SSiP/ CHAS/TrustMark)*	(£95+VAT) £114.00	(£160+VAT) £192.00	(£160+VAT) £192.00	(£160+VAT) £192.00	(£160+VAT) £192.00	TBA
Year 3 (interim reassessment)*	(£450+VAT) £540.00	(£570+VAT) £684.00	(£775+VAT) £930.00	(£1,080+VAT) £1,296.00	(£1,500+VAT) £1,800.00	TBA
Year 4 Desktop Audit (SSiP/ CHAS/TrustMark)*	(£95+VAT) £114.00	(£160+VAT) £192.00	(£160+VAT) £192.00	(£160+VAT) £192.00	(£160+VAT) £192.00	TBA

*cost excludes CHAS / TrustMark annual licence fees (£60+VAT) £72 and (£40+VAT) £48 respectively

Table 5 – Assessment and Reassessment fees

Notes

- These fees are for your assessment, advice, verbal feedback and written report. Once the Standard has been met the Scheme management fee becomes payable, initially pro-rata
- The fees shown cover one to two days of assessment with one, two or three assessors, dependent on the business size (2–5, 6–9, 10-19 and 20+ people respectively). Fees for multi-site businesses will vary according to size and the number of sites.
- Most small businesses complete the full assessment (all four modules) in one day. Applicants may, however, choose to spread modules across two or more days. The fees shown will be applicable for each day of assessment.
- To help small businesses where, for example, the main manager is also the main climber, the AA can offer to undertake the assessment over two consecutive days with a reduced daily fee for the second day of £354 (£295+VAT).
- If the outcome of an assessment is non-compliance further assessment will be required. The type of further assessment will depend on the degree of non-compliance This is shown in detail on page 9 (first assessment) and page 11 (reassessment) and is summarised in section 4, page 13 and will be one of the following:
 - minor non-compliance requiring submission of evidence of compliance by post or email within 3 months, when a charge of £108 (£90+VAT) will apply
or
 - major non-compliance requiring submission of evidence of compliance by post or email within 3-6 months, when a charge of £300 (£250+VAT) will apply,
or
 - major non-compliance requiring revisit of assessor(s) within 3-6-9 months when a charge of £624 (£520+VAT) per assessor per day will apply.

⁹ See guidance in section 2.

ARB Approved Contractor Scheme



3. Annual scheme management fees Table 6 (below)

	Small business		Medium business	Larger businesses		
Business size ¹⁰ →	1-5 people	6-9 people	10-19 people	20-49 people	≥50 people	Multi-site
ArbAC Scheme Management Fee	(£295+VAT) £354.00	(£405+VAT) £486.00	(£570+VAT) £684.00	(£820+VAT) £984.00	(£1,025+VAT) £1,230.00	TBA

NOTE: The above subscription fees are based on 12 months membership. A full pro-rata amount will be due following full approval (e.g. if your September you will pay 3/12ths of the amount shown, i.e. to cover October - December (inclusive))

Table 6 – Annual Scheme management fee.

Notes

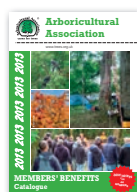
1. These fees are for your annual membership of the ARB Approved Contractor Scheme.
2. They also include your business entry onto the 'Find a Tree Surgeon' section of the AA website, your access to free general 'SHE' advice and guidance, your regular 'SHE' updates and industry news and other ArbAC scheme benefits, e.g. training discounts on AA courses (in most instances) and free entry to the annual ARB Show.
3. They also include a single area entry onto the 'Find a Tree Surgeon' section of the AA website based on the business location.

As well as running the ARB Approved Contractor Scheme the AA is central to the arboricultural industry.

Why Join the Arb Association?

Save money

with the AA Membership Benefits Scheme on the latest AA training courses and up to 25% on trade supplies



Stay ahead

with the information in The ARB Magazine: the AA's member only publication (formerly the AA Newsletter) and the Arboricultural Journal¹



Receive Professional Recognition

through our progressive membership grade structure

[Your Name] CEnv [Your Name] MArborA [Your Name] FArborA

Enter the **ARB Show** free



Broaden your horizons
and **contribute** to the development of worldwide arboriculture



See also the benefits of becoming an ARB Approved Contractor on page 3.

¹⁰ See guidance in section 2.1

The Arboricultural Association



A Membership organisation

- For the trade
- For the profession
- With grades suitable for every position in the industry



A publishing organisation

- The ARB Magazine: industry news, events, science and opinion
- The scientific peer-reviewed Arboricultural Journal
- Technical guides, books and information leaflets



A Representative body

- Representing the needs of industry to government and other regulators
- Representing the needs of society and its reliance on trees



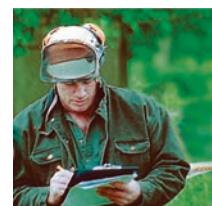
A training organisation

- Short courses for specialist arboricultural issues
- Industry accredited training courses
- Technical advisor for academic arboricultural qualifications
- Technical conferences for utility and amenity arboriculture



An awarding body

- for AA Registered Consultant status
- for ARB Approved Contractor status
- for Chartered Environmentalist status, under licence from the Society for the Environment



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