



## BSS Field Assessments – Essential Information for Examiners

<b>Q1.</b>	<b>What are Field Assessments?</b>
A1.	Field Assessments are one of the BSS Office’s quality assurance measures. The main aim is to support BSS Examiners in carrying out consistent Examinations every time, in line with the Examination Checking Procedures (ECP) and published Examination guidance. Field Assessments help Examiners to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and help the BSS Office Team to support the BSS Delivering Consistent BSS Examinations [core] process. It also provides information to assist in ongoing improvement measures, such as improving Examiner training and/or upgrading BSS support material, etc.
<b>Q2.</b>	<b>Who must attend Field Assessments?</b>
A2.	The scope of the Field Assessment process applies to all current practising BSS Examiners. The BSS Conditions of Registration require that BSS Examiners participate in BSS quality assurance programme activities.
<b>Q3.</b>	<b>How are Examiners selected?</b>
A3.	Every Examiner will attend a Field Assessment, and it is expected that an Examiner will be Field Assessed on a rolling basis, typically over a 5-year period. However, Examiners who are conducting particularly high or low numbers of Examinations may be field assessed more frequently. The Field Assessment process works alongside the Desktop Assessment process, so Examiners should expect to undertake some form of quality assurance activity regularly.
<b>Q4.</b>	<b>Do I have to pay for the Field Assessment?</b>
A4.	No, Field Assessments are provided by the BSS Office as part of our in-house Examiner support and quality assurance measures, but Examiners are responsible for making their way to the Assessment site and attending the Assessment, at their own expense.  Please note however, that in the event you cancel an arranged Assessment, the BSS Office reserve the right to pass on to you any costs incurred by them in cancelling and re-arranging the Assessment. So please make sure that you do everything you reasonably can to keep to arrangements made with the Assessor.
<b>Q5.</b>	<b>Where do Field Assessments take place?</b>
A5.	Each Assessment takes place on board a suitable boat and where practicable, the boat will be owned and/or managed by the BSS. However, occasionally, it may still be necessary to undertake Field Assessments on boats made available by companies, private individuals or navigation authorities.  The Assessment boats owned by the BSS are located in Northamptonshire and Norwich and the location will be chosen based on the location of your public address that you have provided on the BSS Database. The boats are located in boatyards, marinas, etc, to where there is good road access, suitable parking and easy access to the Assessment boat.
<b>Q6.</b>	<b>How will I be invited to participate in a Field Assessment?</b>
A6.	The Examiner will be invited by email from the BSS Office, where details of the Assessor will be provided. The Assessor will contact you to arrange a time and date, and you should engage with the Assessor as though they were the boat owner, completing a written agreement, etc.



<b>Q7.</b>	<b>When will the Field Assessment take place?</b>
A7.	Normally, Field Assessments should be completed within a maximum of two months of the Examiner receiving the notification email. The actual date and time of the Assessment will be arranged between you and the Assessor. Assessors have to juggle the availability of boats and their own availability. As such, please do everything you reasonably can to be flexible and to accommodate any dates offered by the Assessor.
<b>Q8.</b>	<b>How long will the Field Assessment take?</b>
A8.	Normally, the Assessment should not take longer than 3 hours and it is anticipated that this is sufficient time for a Field Assessment. There are likely to be other Assessments taking place on the same day, so the Assessor will manage the time during the Assessment. However, you should be timely in keeping to your agreed appointment otherwise, there is a risk of impacting on the success of the day for yourself and possibly another Examiner.
<b>Q9.</b>	<b>What happens if I have a concern regarding the assigned Assessor or the allocated Field Assessment timescale?</b>
A9.	Don't delay, get in touch with the Assessor or the BSS Office Team (as appropriate) immediately you realise there might be a problem. It is your responsibility to also help make the Assessment work and that includes spotting any concerns or predicaments well ahead of time.
<b>Q10.</b>	<b>Do you recognise Special Educational Needs?</b>
A10.	We are fully conversant with Special Educational Needs (SENs), and if you have made us aware of this previously, it will be recorded on your details page on the BSS Database (and kept in strict confidence within the BSS Team). The BSS Office and Assessor will be aware of this and will take this into account. If you have conditions or needs that you have not previously made us aware of, and that we need to consider, please get in touch with the Assessor or the BSS Office Team as soon as you can.
<b>Q11.</b>	<b>What happens if I am ill on the day of the Field Assessment?</b>
A11.	If there's a genuine last-minute crisis we understand, but you must advise the Assessor or the BSS Office as soon as you can.
<b>Q12.</b>	<b>What will happen on the day of the Field Assessment?</b>
A12.	The Assessor will meet you on-site at the time and place agreed. Then, before the Assessment starts, the Assessor will take you through a pre-assessment briefing, during which they will explain the Assessment process and activities. This discussion will allow you the opportunity to clarify any issues and to ask questions before the Assessment starts.
<b>Q13.</b>	<b>How will the Field Assessment actually be carried out?</b>
A13.	There are three main elements to Field Assessments: <u>1. Element 1 - Examination documentation and equipment</u> The Assessor will ask to see the Examination documentation and equipment you've brought to the FA. This is to help ensure you take the correct items to Examinations. <u>Element 2 - Examination</u> You will undertake a partial BSS Examination against three Core ECP Parts (which Parts will vary depending on the particulars of the Assessment boat).





A13.	<p>The Assessor's role is to watch you undertake the Examination. They will assess your performance against the following key Examination and fieldcraft skill criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>whether you are suitably methodical and/or systematic in your Examination of the boat and your application of the Checks</li><li>your knowledge of the ECP</li><li>whether you are suitably thorough with your application of the Checking actions</li><li>your ability to explain BSS Requirement non-compliances found during your Examination</li><li>your completion of the BSS Examination Record Form (Sections 1, 2 and 3).</li></ol> <p>The Assessor will endeavour not to interrupt your Examination/concentration too much, but they will invite you to talk them through your actions and decisions as you undertake the Examination. However, we realise some Examiners have difficulty concentrating on the Examination process with people around them and having to talk spoils their concentration. If you have such concerns, make sure you let the Assessor know during the pre-assessment briefing.</p> <p>Once you have finished your Examination against the first ECP Part (e.g. ECP Part 2 – Permanently installed fuel systems and fixed engines) the Assessor will provide you with verbal feedback on your performance against the above listed criteria. This initial feedback will either reinforce your confidence that your performance is as expected or give you pointers as to how to change and improve your practices for the remainder of the simulated Examination.</p> <p>The Assessor may also provide some practical training – see Question 14.</p> <p>At the end of the Examination (when you have completed your examination against the three ECP Parts) the Assessor will give further verbal feedback, providing you with an overview of your performance against the above key Examination and fieldcraft skill criteria. At this time, the Assessor will also take copies of your completed BSS Examination Record Form.</p> <p><u>Element 3 - Open discussions in support of improved performance (Examiner and BSS Office)</u></p> <p>This will be an opportunity for you to discuss, informally or formally, any queries, concerns or other matters you would like to air or have answered by the Assessor - you can raise any subject matter you like. It can be about your own knowledge or skills, or it can be about more general matters. Particularly welcome are constructive suggestions where you may have spotted a specific matter that the BSS Office Team can do better or differently that will have a positive impact on Examiner performance.</p> <p>For each topic raised, the Assessor will specifically ask you whether you would like it to remain informal (just between you and the Assessor) or whether you would like the Assessor to report your discussions back to the BSS Office. For any discussion topic reported back to the BSS Office by the Assessor, an initial BSS Office response will be included in your BSS Field Assessment Feedback Report (see further information below).</p>
<b>Q14.</b>	<b>Will there be any training during the Field Assessment?</b>
A14.	<p>The Field Assessment is not a specific training event however, once you have finished your Examination against the first ECP Part (e.g. ECP Part 2 – Permanently installed fuel systems and fixed engines) the Assessor will provide you with verbal feedback on your performance.</p> <p>Should the Assessor deem that you would benefit from practical training, they will provide you with such training before you carry on with the Assessment.</p> <p>The Assessor will talk through how to systematically divide the boat's systems into training chunks and how to physically apply the relevant Checking Actions. You will be encouraged to discuss the process and engage with compliance decisions.</p> <p>Once the Assessor feels that you have an understanding of what is required, you will be asked to carry on with the remainder of the Examination.</p>





<b>Q15.</b>	<b>What should I take with me to the Field Assessment?</b>
A15.	<p>You should approach the Field Assessment as if it were a normal BSS Examination on a privately owned or privately managed boat, and as such, take with you all the appropriate support material, equipment, protective clothing, etc that you would normally take to such an Examination.</p> <p>NOTE: Some of the Field Assessment locations require additional Personal Protective Equipment or certain clothing to be worn and you will be advised on this appropriately.</p>
<b>Q16.</b>	<b>What responsibilities do I have?</b>
A16.	<p>During Field Assessments, you have the same responsibilities and duties of care as when you are conducting normal BSS Examinations. In particular, you will be responsible for your own health and safety, and have a duty of care in respect of all other parties and materials, including the Assessor and the Assessment boat.</p>
<b>Q17.</b>	<b>Who is responsible for reporting any BSS non-compliances, or other duty of care items, to the owner of the boat?</b>
A17.	<p>In the event you identify non-compliances on a boat that is not owned and/or managed by the BSS during the Assessment, or other duty of care matters are noted during the Assessment as a whole, it will be the Assessor's responsibility to report these to the BSS Office, which in turn has a responsibility to report them to the owner of the boat.</p>
<b>Q18.</b>	<b>What happens if the relationship between the Examiner and the Assessor breaks down during the Field Assessment?</b>
A18.	<p>If the situation cannot be retrieved, the Assessor will terminate the Assessment and report the circumstances to the BSS Technical and Quality Manager, who will consider what action can be taken to ensure you have another Field Assessment opportunity under different circumstances. You are also welcome to contact the BSS Technical and Quality Manager directly should you wish</p>
<b>Q19.</b>	<b>Will I receive a written feedback report following the Field Assessment?</b>
A19.	<p>Yes, you will receive a BSS Field Assessment Feedback Report, normally within 14 days of the Assessment.</p> <p>The report will be in PDF format and will be emailed to you by the BSS Quality Assurance Team.</p> <p>The report will consist of three sections:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. An introduction</li><li>ii. The Assessor's Observations</li><li>iii. BSS Office Observations and Comments</li></ol> <p>The Assessor's Observations section</p> <p>Within this section, the Assessor will provide feedback on each of the following key Examination activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Did the Examiner bring with them to the Assessment Examination all the correct Examination documentation and equipment?</li><li>b. Where appropriate, did the Examiner apply the Checks to the installed systems in a systematic and methodical manner?</li><li>c. Did the Examiner have a good understanding of the ECP Checks and how to apply them, and did they refer to their ECP if needed?</li><li>d. Was the Examiner suitably thorough with their application of the Checks?</li><li>e. Did the Examiner report their Examination findings to the Assessor (acting as the boat owner) in a suitable manner?</li></ol>



A19.	<p>f. Did the Examiner complete the BSS Examination Record Form (Sections 1, 2 and 3) appropriately?</p> <p>For each activity, the Assessor will identify whether your performance was:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. In line with published Examination guidance, with no improvements required, or</li><li>2. Almost in line with published Examination guidance, with only minor improvements required, or</li><li>3. Not in line with published Examination guidance, with some significant improvements required, or</li><li>4. Not in line with published Examination guidance, with widespread improvements required.</li></ol> <p>If you raised any formal open discussion topic with the Assessor during the Field Assessment, these will be included in this section.</p> <p><u>The BSS Office Observations and Comments section</u></p> <p>This will list any Personal Improvement Plan (PIP) Tasks set by the BSS Office as a consequence of the Field Assessment. Any requirement to attend a fieldcraft training event following the Assessment will also be set out in this section. See Question 20 for further information on post-Field Assessment interventions.</p>
<b>Q20. Will I have to do anything after I've received my Feedback Report?</b>	
A20.	<p>Your feedback report will be comprehensive, detailed and provide relevant feedback and guidance on your performance.</p> <p>For any Examination activities recorded as 'almost in line', you will be asked to take notice of improvement suggestions set out in the feedback report and work on improving your performance accordingly.</p> <p>For any Examination activities recorded as 'not in line with some significant improvements required', you will be asked to take notice of the improvement suggestions set out in the feedback report and work on improving your performance accordingly. Additionally, Personal Improvement Plan (PIP) Tasks will be set by the BSS Office to provide additional support and assurance that you understand what is required. PIP Tasks may require the Examiner to participate in additional online training.</p> <p>If your performance was found as 'not in line, with widespread improvements required', you will be required to attend a BSS Examination Fieldcraft Training day. Examiners whose performance falls into this category may be suspended depending on their performance during the FA, and this will be determined on a case by case basis by the QA Team and the BSS Technical &amp; Quality Manager. Suspension would be likely should the BSS Office feel that the Examiner's performance is likely to create unwanted risk to the navigation authorities, boat owners or the BSS Office.</p>
<b>Q21. Can I provide feedback on my Field Assessment experience?</b>	
A21.	<p>Following completion of your Assessment and receipt of your Feedback Report, you will be invited to take part in a short survey. This will allow you an opportunity to provide the BSS Office with valuable feedback about your Assessment and Assessor. Survey results will be provided to the BSS Technical and Quality Manager for review and action.</p>
<b>Q22. How does the BSS monitor the Assessors?</b>	
A22.	<p>Field Assessors are subjected to a Field Assessment by a senior Assessor, exactly the same as an Examiner. There are also desk-based procedures for reviewing their assessment performance and techniques.</p>





<b>Q23. Am I insured?</b>	
A23.	Whilst on-site and on board the Assessment boat you should be covered by your own BSS Examiner Liability insurance for any loss/damage you may cause during your Field Assessment.
<b>Q24. What about my health and safety?</b>	
A24.	While on site and on board the Assessment boat, you will be responsible for your own health and safety and have due respect for third-party risks and interests in the same way you are during normal BSS Examinations.
<b>Q25. Are the Field Assessments applicable in any way to the BSS Requirements for hire boats or commercial boats?</b>	
A25.	Routine Field Assessments are relevant to the Core Examination Checking Procedures (Parts 2 to 9) as applicable to privately owned and managed boats. Your routine Field Assessment may be undertaken on a hire boat, but during the Assessment, you will be asked to ignore this and undertake the Assessment Examination as if it were a private boat.  Notwithstanding the above, authorised Examiners may be invited to attend specialised BSS Field Assessments related to hire boats or non-private/commercial boats.

## BSS Field Assessment – Essential Information

**t:** 0333 202 1000 **e:** [bss.enquiries@boatsafetyscheme.org](mailto:bss.enquiries@boatsafetyscheme.org) **w:** [www.boatsafetyscheme.org](http://www.boatsafetyscheme.org)

The Boat Safety Scheme Limited is a not for profit company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales with company number 15501423, registered office address c/o National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port South Pier Road, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire CH65 4FW.

