BPIF Colour Quality Management Certification Scheme factsheet

Background to the certification scheme

The BPIF (British Printing Industries Federation) ISO 12647 certification scheme requirements were published in February 2010, and version 3 of the scheme, now titled the BPIF Colour Quality Management Certification Scheme, was published in November 2017. The document is available from the BPIF (www.britishprint.com) and is available to all printers, not just members of the BPIF, and it defines the requirements for certification.

The scheme takes ISO 9001 and adds requirements specific to the pre-press and printing process, as well as the colour values and tolerances defined in the ISO 12647 series of standards, or any other accepted standard. As a result, the certification scheme can now be applied to any printing production method and process, and including outsourced printing, pre-press and proofing

PMC's world leading accredited certification through the BPIF colour quality management certification scheme

Certification is achieved through audits against the scheme's requirements by PMC. Certification is open to any organisation seeking to meet an accepted colour quality standard(s) through the BPIF scheme, including, but not exclusively, the ISO 12647 series of standards.

PMC is the only certification body to be accredited by UKAS for certification to this scheme, and is the only accredited certification body for the scheme in the UK. There are two levels of certification in version 3 of the scheme: "Professional" and "Elite". The "Professional" certificate is awarded to printers passing a product test under audit conditions and meeting the minimum requirements of the scheme. The "Elite" certificate is awarded to those organisations who meet the full requirements of the scheme for their particular scope of activities and who have passed a product test under audit conditions (if appropriate for the scope).

Benefits of certification

There are many benefits, including
-independent and impartial confirmation of colour quality capability
-listing on the PMC Colour Centre, available to global print buyers;
-greater product colour quality;
-significantly reduced wastage;
-reduced make ready and downtime;
-more efficient colour management workflows
-qualification for tenders;
-highly motivated and skilled staff;
-reduced colour quality complaints;
-new product markets and new customers.

PMC's colour quality management certification is the only accredited certification for colour quality that identifies printers, print managers and other suppliers to customers, and is verified through an independent and impartial audit and testing process.

Costs of certification

The cost of the audit is determined on a case by case basis, depending on your specific requirements. Please contact Jon Stack on 07813 618831 or jon.stack@printcertification.co.uk to obtain a quotation.

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The scheme requirements document is available to anyone, including non BPIF members, from the BPIF. Contact Chris Selby, Sales and Specialist Services Director (Chris.Selby@bpif.org.uk 07801 981341), or BPIF Specialist Services Manager, Meeka Walwyn-Lewis (meeka.walwyn-lewis@bpif.org.uk 01924 203335) for copies of the scheme document and further information.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are there two levels of certification for the scheme?
The two levels of certification, "Professional" and "Elite", are intended to provide a stepping stone approach to achieving full certification under the scheme. Those with a "Professional" certification have demonstrated that they meet the minimum requirements of the scheme, and that they are capable of printing in compliance with the relevant standard. An "Elite" certification demonstrates that the organisation meets the full requirements of the scheme, can make compliant claims on individual jobs if required, and is committed to continual improvement through a colour quality system.

What does accreditation mean?
Accreditation is carried out by National Accreditation Bodies such as UKAS in the UK (www.ukas.com) and is awarded to certification bodies for providing certification for customers in particular industry sectors. To become accredited, certification bodies have to demonstrate that they are competent, impartial and independent in their certification work, and meet the relevant requirements of the international standard which applies for that certification. Certifications issued by accredited certification bodies like PMC also have full international recognition. PMC is the only print specialist UKAS accredited certification body in the UK.

How should I choose a certification body?
You should always choose a certification body specifically UKAS accredited for the BPIF certification scheme, and the certification body, its auditors and other staff must be print specialists and entirely impartial in their work.

Do I need to be certified to ISO 9001?
For a "Professional" level certification, you do not need a separate certification for ISO 9001. For the "Elite" certification, you are required to operate a colour quality system which meets the requirements of ISO 9001 and the other requirements as specified in the BPIF scheme.

How do I decide which standard to include in the scope of the certification?
The standard or standards you choose to be included in the scope of your certification, are down to you to choose. These can be a published standard, like ISO 12647, a customised printing condition, which you define yourself, or a customer defined standard. These can be discussed with PMC in advance, and the precise standard(s) chosen is the one which will be assessed in the PMC audit product test

Do all my jobs have to be compliant when I am certified?
No, only for those jobs where you decide to make a claim of compliance, although you may choose to print compliant jobs without making a specific claim to customers. You can also make claims for standards other than ISO 12647, if that standard is within the scope of the certification. Claims should be printed on your invoices and delivery notes to your customer. For jobs with a compliant claim, you will need to submit your own compliance data to PMC on a quarterly basis.

Do I need to run product tests on all my presses?
No, you choose which presses you wish to test for each production method at each site (eg digital, lithographic) and if it passes the audit's product test, then you have completed one of the steps to achieving certification.

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If I wish to claim compliance for a production print job to my customer, do I need to run it on a press which has passed an audit product test?
No, you can run the production job on any press at any site, and production method and process at that site, which are included in the scope of the certification. A site can only be included in the scope if at least one press, using that production method, has passed an audit product test.

How long do the audits take?
For the "Elite" certification, the length of the initial audit depends on the scope of the certification and the number of presses to be tested, the number of sites included, and other factors, so this has to be assessed on an individual company basis. The initial audit comes in two stages, with the audit product test normally conducted at Stage 2. Audits will take place annually once certified, with surveillance audits taking less time to complete than the initial audit, until a full system re-audit is required in the third year.

For the "Professional" certification, the audit is a product test and an assessment of the organisation against the minimum requirements of the BPIF scheme: this takes no longer than a day, depending on the time taken for the test run.

How often do I have to run a product test?
For both "Elite" and "Professional" certifications, a successful product test must be run annually in order to maintain certification.

What happens if I fail the product test?
You can request further audit product tests at any time from PMC. If you are already certified, and a product test fails, then you have 3 months to complete a satisfactory test.

Can I run an audit product test during an audit for, say, ISO 9001 or 14001?
Yes, as long as your audit is conducted by PMC. Discounted fee rates apply for product tests run during scheduled audits for other standards. Or, if you have a certification from another certification body, this can be transferred to PMC free of charge, and PMC's audits can then also include an audit product test for the BPIF scheme.

How do I tell my customers that I am certified?
You can use the compliant product claim on invoices and delivery notes. Once certified you will receive PMC's prestigious certification mark, and the UKAS "crown and tick" accreditation symbol to use for promotion of your company on letterheads, brochures, websites etc . You will also appear on PMC's website, together with the scope of your certification, so that you can be found by potential customers seeking certified suppliers. You receive a certificate from PMC on paper, and electronically, which details the scope of your certification. PMC is also happy to contribute to your press releases or other promotional material.

Can organisations other than printers be certified?
Yes, print managers can be certified with a certification scope of "outsourced printing", and in addition, suppliers of pre-press services such as artwork, proofing or plate production can also be certified under the scheme

I know a printer claiming to be certified to ISO 12647. How do I know it's a genuine certification?
Many printers make claims of certification to ISO 12647, but certifications are only valid and fully recognised when issued by a UKAS accredited certification body, as for the BPIF scheme.

I know a printer claiming compliance to ISO 12647. Is this a meaningful claim?
Undergoing fully independent and impartial product testing is the only meaningful way to claim compliance to ISO 12647. Compliance certificates issued by equipment or software suppliers are not independent and would not be UKAS accredited as a result.

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If I already have ISO 9001 certification, does this reduce the cost and time involved in 12647 audits?
If you have a PMC ISO 9001 certification, then the audit for the "Elite" certification of the BPIF scheme will take account of the results of the 9001 audits and your audit time, and hence costs, will be reduced accordingly. PMC will accept transfers of ISO 9001 certifications from other accredited certification bodies free of charge, and can pick up the audit schedule as it is. PMC can also conduct audit product tests for the BPIF scheme during PMC's audits for other standards such as ISO 9001 or 14001.

Can I combine my ISO 9001 or ISO 14001 audits with BPIF colour quality scheme audits?
Yes, PMC will be happy to combine your audits and transfer your certification from other non-print specialist certification bodies. We would simply pick up your audit at your next scheduled date. Combined audits would reduce time and cost, using the same auditor at the same audit visit, to cover the different systems.

How is the product test conducted?
PMC will agree on the length of sample to be run, and the number of sheets to be taken in the run. An auditor must be present during the full run. The content of the test forme, and the number of measurement zones on the sheet are defined in the BPIF scheme, and agreed with PMC in advance. The colour aim values, tolerances, printing and measurement conditions are also defined and agreed in advance. In certain circumstances, an actual job may be used, as long as sufficient and suitable colour measurement patches are present for PMC to measure. The test sample is taken away by the auditor for measurement by PMC offsite.

Does the certification apply to all types of presses?
The BPIF scheme applies to all recognised colour quality standards and so takes in all of the production methods and processes defined in those standards.

Where can I get help and advice in preparation for audits and product tests?
As an accredited certification body, and to ensure impartiality, PMC is not permitted to provide any consultancy or advice with regard to the design and implementation of systems to meet the requirements of the scheme, nor can PMC endorse any products. PMC can provide contact details for independent consultants if required, but does not itself provide a listing of recommended consultants.

Who should I contact to find out more about certification, the costs and time involved, or to arrange an audit?
The cost of the audit is determined on a case by case basis, depending on your specific requirements Contact Jon Stack at PMC on 07813 618831 or on jon.stack@printcertification.co.uk with any questions. We're also happy to visit and discuss your requirements.
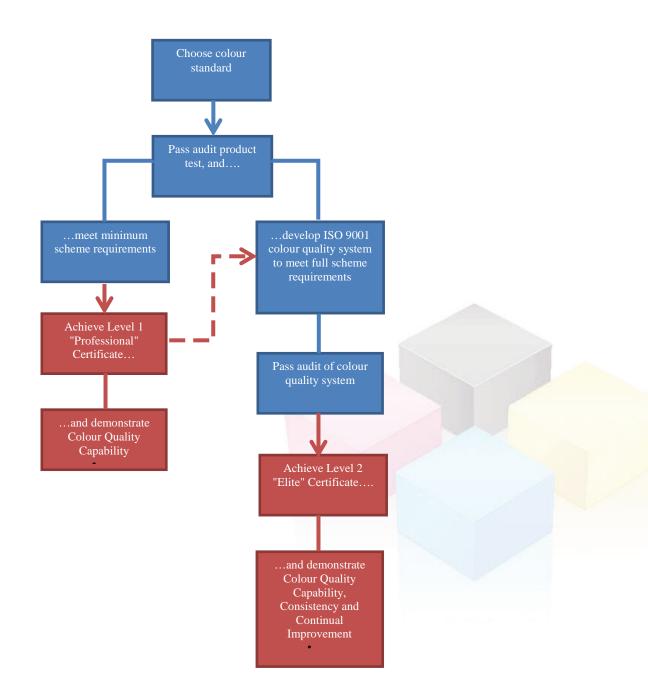
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        │ scheme          │   │ colour quality    │
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        │                 │   │ full scheme       │
        │                 │   │ requirements      │
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