



## Qualifying your business for the supply of high risk products and services

Link-up Supplier Audit Scheme



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Being audited is often a resource-consuming and costly activity for both client and supplier. The Link-up® Audit scheme enables multiple rail industry clients to share the results of an audit based on industry standard audit criteria.

Link-up Audit is the UK rail industry audit scheme for suppliers of high risk products and services who have achieved successful qualification through Link-up. The scheme enables suppliers to go through a single audit process. A process that has been developed by Achilles with the help of Network Rail and other industry specialists and has been approved by representatives of both buyer and supplier sectors of the rail industry.

## The Link-up Audit scheme has five clear objectives:

- Delivering a single shared audit process throughout the rail community
- Reducing duplication of audits
- Providing a fair, open and transparent process
- Increasing supplier competence and facilitating their development
- Ensuring suppliers meet the standards required by the scheme.

## Link-up Audit makes demonstrating your company's compliance with regulatory requirements more straightforward and cost-effective.

The benefits it brings are:

- Reduced duplication of effort associated with multiple audits
- Audit qualification status demonstrates your business competency
- Fair, open and transparent processes applied to all suppliers
- Access to Link-up Audit core module and question sets available in advance of the audit
- Helps your business understand management system requirements
- Audit results shared to all Link-up subscribers and available for your own use.

“The Link-up and Audit schemes are an essential management tool which VolkerRail regularly use to:

- Select suppliers for tendering purposes
- Qualify new suppliers
- Assist in the regular audits of our existing supplier base
- Monitor our suppliers on a daily basis.”

Liz Quinn  
Procurement Manager  
VolkerRail



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Gaining the Link-up qualification via audit is an achievement of which any business should be proud, and one that enables approved suppliers to display the Link-up qualification stamp.

# Qualification via Link-up Audit

## Who it affects...

The aim of Link-up Audit is to confirm that all suppliers of high risk products and services to the rail industry demonstrate compliance with set requirements.

The identification of such suppliers is currently through two main routes:

- Suppliers who apply for a Link-up product code that has been classified as auditable
- Suppliers that need to sponsor Personal Track Safety (PTS) qualified staff under Network Rail's Sentinel scheme.

All Link-up product codes that are classified as auditable under the Link-up scheme are listed in the Link-up Product Code Guide. Link-up's subscribers regularly review the classification of those product codes that could involve importing risk to their businesses.



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## How qualification works...

Qualifying your business on the Link-up Audit scheme is achieved through the completion of an annual Link-up Audit. The audit takes place on the supplier's premises and focuses on documented management systems.

The audit is based on a core audit and an additional question set which covers supplier's activities in relation to their other auditable product codes.

## The process to qualify includes the following elements:

**Link-up Qualification:** Successful qualification through Link-up under the relevant Link-up product codes must be achieved before qualification through Link-up Audit can commence.

**Core Audit:** A Link-up Core Audit verifies your company's documented management systems which support: general organisational, subcontracting, health, safety, environment and competence standards. This is a requirement for those wishing to sponsor staff through the sentinel scheme.

**Product Code Audit:** The Link-up Product Code Audit verifies your company's documented management systems that support the supply of specific products or services.

**"The Link-up Qualification Scheme enables rail industry customers and suppliers to do business in a fair and transparent market place. It is integral to Network Rail's procurement process and our approach to supply chain risk management.**

**Link-up supports the commitments set out in the Network Rail Supply Chain Charter and is governed in a manner which is consistent with our values of Determination, Respect, Teamwork and Pride. "**

**Stuart Norfolk, Head of Supplier Assurance and Account Management.**

## Link-up: Rail Industry Best Practice

The Link-up scheme makes best use of the expertise and resources within the Rail Industry to establish questions that reflect the industry requirements. These are then built into company-specific audit protocols reflecting the product codes selected by the company to be audited.

Amongst the sources of these questions are individual industry experts, professional bodies, trade associations, and Link-up subscribers including Network Rail. The question sets are regularly reviewed to ensure they meet the requirements of Link-up subscribers and industry legislation.

Link-up auditors are selected on the basis of expertise and experience in three main areas: general auditing experience, rail industry experience and product code specific knowledge. All Link-up auditors have to complete the Link-up Licensed Auditor's development programme in addition to holding appropriate qualifications and competencies which include NEBOSH Certification (or equivalent) and Lead Assessor status.

## Link-up: Application Process

- Step 1:** Complete Link-up Qualification under the appropriate Link-up Product Codes.
- Step 2:** A Link-up Audit advice notice will be sent automatically for all auditable Link-up Product Codes for which you have expressed an interest and the Core Audit Module where necessary.
- Step 3:** Complete and forward the necessary pro-forma with payment. Upon receipt of this, a Link-up Auditor will be assigned to contact you and arrange a date for the audit to be conducted and you will receive your unique question set and compliance guidance.
- Step 4:** Upon successful completion of the Link-up Audit your qualification status and audit report is uploaded to Link-up for all Link-up buyers to access. A Link-up Audit Certificate will be sent to mark your achievement and you can also request the Link-up Qualified Via Audit stamp to include on your marketing literature.



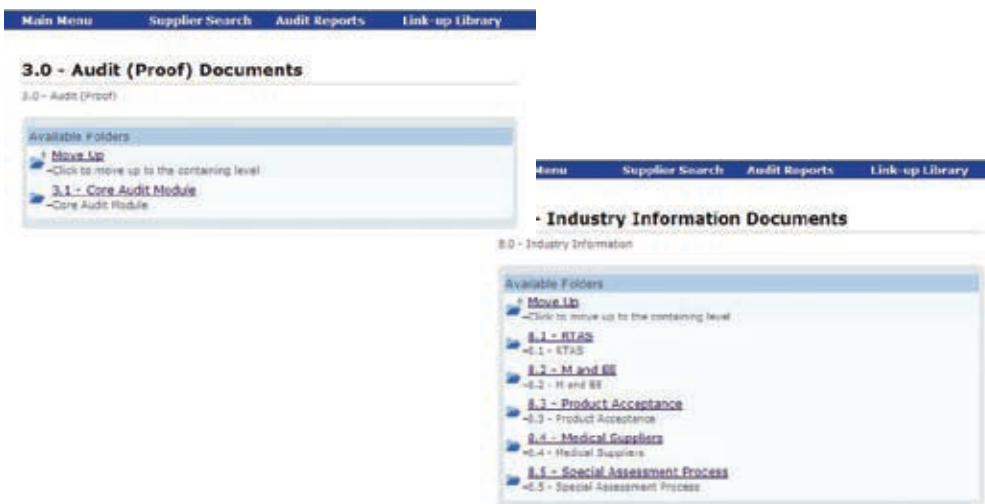
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## Link-up – Qualification Via Audit: fees

The fee for a Link-up Audit depends on the number of Link-up Product Codes being audited. Fees include the on-site audit, audit report and associated auditor's time:

- £ Link-up Core Audit and up to 16 product code questions: £1312.50+VAT
- £ Where the Core Audit is not required - up to 70 product code questions: £1312.50+VAT
- £ Additional product code questions: £17.00+VAT per question asked
- £ An optional Link-up Information Seminar is also available to assist with audit preparation at £200+VAT per delegate.

## Link-up at [www.rail.achilles.com](http://www.rail.achilles.com)



What our customers say about us...

- “ Provides a constant measure of competence across the rail industry”
- “ Assists Kier in maintaining our own high standards”
- “ A valuable interface between us and the supply chain.”

Jem Bezodis  
Safety & Assurance Manager  
Kier Construction (Group)



Link-up is the rail industry website for supplier qualification and the means by which Link-up subscribers access Link-up qualified suppliers.

Upon successful completion of the Link-up Audit your qualification status and audit report is uploaded to Link-up for all Link-up buyers to access. As a supplier you will be able to:

- £ Download Link-up core audit documentation and other relevant material at any time to give you advance preparation for the Link-up Audit
- £ View and download your own completed Link-up audit reports
- £ View your qualification via audit status
- £ View Link-up news and key industry documents including codes of practice
- £ Download the Link-up Qualification Stamp to include on your own literature.

To find out more, contact:

Link-up Team  
T: +44(0)1235 861118  
(8.30am to 5.30pm)  
E: [Link-up@achilles.com](mailto:Link-up@achilles.com)  
W: [www.rail.achilles.com](http://www.rail.achilles.com)



Achilles Information Limited  
30 Park Gate Milton Park Abingdon Oxon OX14 4SH UK  
T: +44 (0)1235 820813 F: +44 (0)1235 821093 E: [enquiries@achilles.com](mailto:enquiries@achilles.com)  
[www.achilles.com](http://www.achilles.com)



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