ASCENTOR

Cyber Essentials Scheme

Protect your business from cyber threats
and gain valuable certification

CYBER
ESSENTIALS

Why you need it

Cybercrime appears in the news on an almost daily basis - but it's not just the large and high-profile organisations that are targeted by cyber criminals. Many smaller businesses don't realise they are at risk too, which can be a very costly misunderstanding. If you are in business and online - you are a target.

What's more, it could already be mandatory. If you are a supplier to government and you hold or have access to government information, as of October 2014 any new contract requires your company to have Cyber Essentials certification. Non-compliance puts your business at a serious commercial disadvantage.

The numbers are alarming. Research has found that 60% of small businesses suffered a malicious breach in the past year and half of them had a serious incident. The worst breaches disrupted operations for small businesses for an average of 7 to 10 days - with loss of customers and damaging profitability and reputation. Don't let it happen to you.

If you are unsure if the technical security controls you have applied to your business network will stop the majority of low level cyber based attacks, the Cyber Essentials standard is ideal for your business.

Whether you choose the Cyber Essentials or the Cyber Essentials Plus certification route, you will be showing your customers you are taking a proactive approach to protecting their information.

What is it?

The Cyber Essentials Scheme sets out an organisational cyber security standard that, if applied appropriately, will protect businesses from the vast majority of low level basic cyber threats. It focuses on 5 key areas - firewalls, secure configuration, access controls, malware and patch management. Cyber Essentials includes an Assurance Framework enabling businesses to obtain Cyber Essentials certification.

Cyber Essentials came into being as earlier initiatives to raise cyber security standards hadn't had the intended impact. In particular, many smaller businesses were still failing to grasp and mitigate their vulnerability to breaches that could result in thousands of pounds worth of damage.

Accordingly, Cyber Essentials now forms part of the HMG push to improve cyber security within the UK.

The options - and how Ascentor can help

Businesses can become certified at 2 levels: Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus.

In addition to the Cyber Essentials certification route, which focuses on the 5 key technical areas, companies can obtain certification to the IASME (Information Assurance for Small and Medium Enterprises) standard, which includes aspects of basic information security governance.

To obtain Cyber Essentials or Cyber Essentials Plus, you will need to work with an accredited Certification Body. Ascentor is accredited by IASME (one of three Cyber Essentials Accreditation Bodies) as a Certification Body.

Cyber Essentials

A basic checklist of best practice security controls for companies with an internet facing IT network. This is the minimum standard required by those with HMG contracts. Each company answers a set of 'online' questions about the application of basic IT security controls, which are reviewed by the Certification Body. There are no site visits, no interviews with IT or security staff, but the questionnaire must be endorsed by senior management. If the answers meet the minimum requirement, a certificate is issued.

Cyber Essentials with IASME

In addition to the Cyber Essentials certification route, which focuses on 5 key technical areas, companies can obtain certification to the IASME (Information Assurance for Small and Medium Enterprises) standard, which includes aspects of basic information security governance.

At Ascentor, we consider that Cyber Essentials with IASME is a better reflection of an organisation's cyber security maturity. This is because, in addition to the technical controls required in Cyber Essentials, the IASME standard asks for evidence of effectiveness of governance, wider security policy, people, physical protection and operations management.

Ascentor was the first company to be licensed by the IASME Consortium to perform IASME assessments. These assessments, involving additional questions over and above the Cyber Essentials questions, can be done at the same time as Cyber Essentials.

By successfully answering the additional questions, the company will gain an IASME certificate as well as the Cyber Essentials certificate and will benefit from Cyber Security Insurance provided by AIG, which provides up to £25,000 of cover.

Cyber Essentials Plus, a range of external and internal technical 'tests' are carried out on site by the Certification Body to provide additional validation of the appropriate application of the Cyber Essentials standard. If the tests are successful, the Certification Body awards the Cyber Essentials Plus certificate.

Supported Cyber Essentials or Cyber Essentials with IASME

If you are not a technology focused company or if you don't have an IT team or security team, you may encounter some difficulty answering the Cyber Essentials or Cyber Essentials with IASME questions.

Ascentor can provide you with a day of on-site consultancy where we will talk you through the process and help you answer the questions. We can't mark our own work and certification would be carried out by another IASME accredited Cyber Essentials Certification Body.

Cyber Essentials Plus

For those companies that would like to show their customers more assurance in the application of Cyber Essentials, or for those with more complex internal IT environments, Cyber Essentials Plus offers a more robust approach.

The Cyber Essentials certificate is a pre-requisite to Cyber Essentials Plus. To achieve Cyber Essentials Plus, a range of external and internal technical 'tests' are carried out on site by the Certification Body to provide additional validation of the appropriate application of the Cyber Essentials standard. If the tests are successful, the Certification Body awards the Cyber Essentials Plus certificate.

How to get it

The following table shows the routes to certification available through Ascentor, including the IASME standard.

Cyber Essentials or Cyber Essentials with IASME	Supported Cyber Essentials or Cyber Essentials with IASME	Cyber Essentials Plus
£300	£1200	£1500*
Call us to get you set up with access to the online questionanaire	Call us to arrange a site visit and we will set you up with access to the online questionnaire	Call us to discuss your requirements, identify the scope of the assessment and arange a site visit
You make payment and receive login details	At the site visit we talk you through the questions and help you fill out the questionnaire	We carry out the Cyber Essentials Plus assessment against the agreed scope
You complete the questionaire at your convenience	A Certification Body will review the answers and award the requisite certificate(s)	If successful, we award you a Cyber Essentials Plus certificate
We validate the answers and if successful, issue you with the requisite certificate(s)	We invoice you	We invoice you
Contact us to order this service	Contact us to order this service	Contact us to order this service

If the assessment is for one site with up to 16 IP addresses and less than 250 staff the cost is £1500

Next steps

To arrange a call with our qualified CES assessors to discuss the merits of the various CES options, please call 01452 881712 or email info@ascentor.co.uk

More information on CES can be found at:

http://www.ascentor.co.uk/2014/09/ia-iasme-crest-cyber-essentials-alphabet-soup-ex-plained/

https://www.iasme.co.uk/index.php/cyberessentialsprofile

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/317480/Cyber_Essentials_Summary.pdf

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/317481/Cyber_Essentials_Requirements.pdf

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/317482/Cyber_Essentials_Assurance_Framework.pdf