

Guidelines on  
**Qualification Scheme for  
Welders of Aluminium  
Alloys**

**July 2022**



**IRCLASS**  
Indian Register of Shipping

## **Guidelines**

### **Qualification Scheme for Welders of Aluminium Alloys**

**July 2022**

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## Section 1

### Scope

1.1 This document provides guidance for a qualification scheme for welders intended to be engaged in welding of aluminium alloys specified in Part 2, Chapter 9 of the *Rules and Regulations for the Construction and Classification of Steel Ships* (hereinafter referred to, as the Rules) for hull structures.

1.2 Requirements for qualification scheme for welders intended to be engaged in welding works of steel are specified in the *Classification Note: Qualification Scheme for Welders of Hull Structural Steels*.

1.3 This qualification scheme does not cover fully mechanized welding process or full automatic welding processes. Each welder intended to be engaged in those welding processes should have experience of the specific welding work concerned.

## Section 2

### General

2.1 Those welders intended to be engaged in welding of hull structures in shipyards and manufacturers should be tested and qualified in accordance with this scheme and issued with a qualification certificate endorsed by IRS.

2.2 This guidance document is applicable to welding of hull structures both during new construction and the repair of ships.

2.3 The training of welders, control of their qualification and maintenance of their skills are normally the responsibility of the Shipyards and manufacturers.

2.4 Welders qualified in accordance with national or international standards may also be engaged in welding of hull structures, at the discretion of IRS.

## Section 3

### Qualification of Welders

3.1 A welder should be qualified in relation to the following variables of welding:

- a) base material
- b) welding process
- c) types of welded joint
- d) plate thickness
- e) welding position

3.2 The material for qualification is shown in Table 3.2.

3.3 The welding processes for welder's qualification are to be classified in Table 3.3 as Semi-automatic welding (S) and TIG welding (T).

3.4 The types of welded joints for welder's qualification are to be classified as given in Table 3.4 in accordance with the qualification test.

3.4.1 A qualification test performed using butt welds automatically qualifies fillet welding.

3.4.2 Welders who are employed to perform fillet welding only would be qualified as FW by IRS. However, where such welders are engaged to weld fillet with groove, they are to be qualified for butt welds.

<b>Table 3.2 Materials for welder's qualification</b>	
<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Materials in actual welding works</b>
AL	Aluminium alloys specified in Part 2, Chapter 9 of the Rules

<b>Table 3.3 Welding processes for welder's qualification</b>			
<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Welding process in actual welding works</b>		<b>ISO 4063:2009</b>
S	Semi-automatic welding	Metal inert gas (MIG) welding	131
T	TIG welding	Tungsten inert gas (TIG) welding	141

Table 3.4 Types of welded joints for welder's qualification				
Type of welded joints used in the test assembly for the qualification test				Type of welded joint qualified
Butt welds	One side	With backing	WB	WB, WG, FW
		Without backing	NB	WB, NB, WG, NG, FW
	Both sides	With gouging	WG	WB, WG, FW
		Without gouging	NG	WB, WG, NG, FW
Fillet welds	/	/	FW	FW

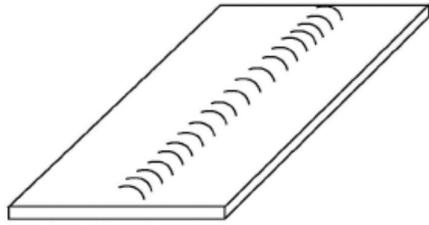
3.5 The qualified plate thickness range arising from the welder qualification test plate thickness is shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 Plate thicknesses for welder's qualification	
Thickness of test assembly T (mm)	Qualified plate thickness range t (mm)
$T \leq 6$	$0.7T \leq t < 2.5T$
$6 < T \leq 15$	$6 < t \leq 40^{1)}$

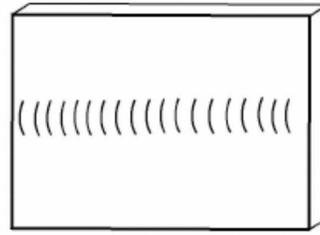
Note: 1) A special test is required for material thicknesses greater than 40mm. Such a special test is to be indicated on the welder's certificate.

3.6 The welding positions qualified as a result of the actual welding position used in a satisfactory welder's qualification test, are shown in Table 3.6. Diagrams showing the definitions of weld positions used in Table 3.6 are shown in Fig. 3.6(a), Fig. 3.6(b), Fig. 3.6(c) and Fig. 3.6(d).

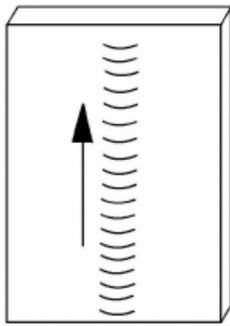
<b>Table 3.6 Welding positions for welder's qualifications</b>		
Qualification Test Positions (See Fig. 3.6(c) and Fig. 3.6(d))	Welding positions in actual welding works	
	Butt welds (See Fig. 3.6(a))	Fillet welds (See Fig. 3.6(b))
1G	F	F, H
2G	F, H	F, H
3G-up	F, H, VU	F, H, VU
3G-down	F, VD	F, VD
4G	F, H, OH	F, H, OH
2G+3G-up+4G	F, H, VU, OH	F, H, VU, OH
1F	-	F
2F	-	F, H
3F-up	-	F, H, VU
3F-down	-	F, VD
4F	-	F, H, OH
2F+3F-up+4F	-	F, H, VU, OH



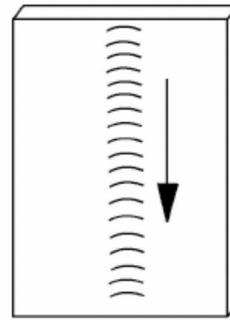
(a) Flat position (F)



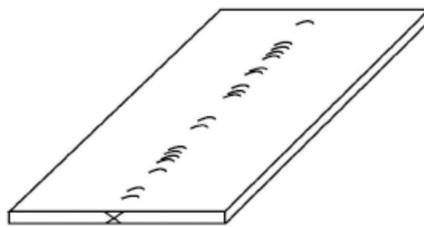
(b) Horizontal position (H)



(c) Vertical upward position (VU)

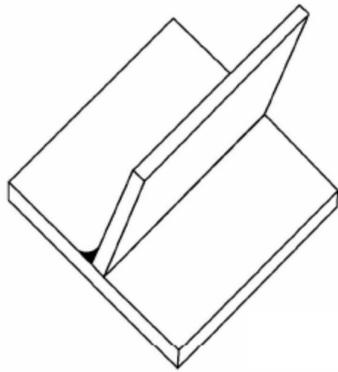


(d) Vertical downward position (VD)

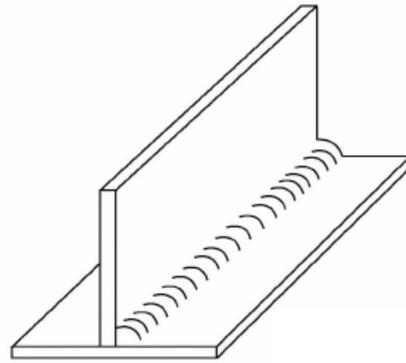


(e) Overhead position (OH)

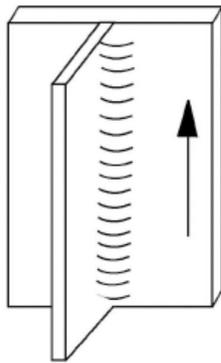
**Fig. 3.6(a) Welding positions (Butt welds)**



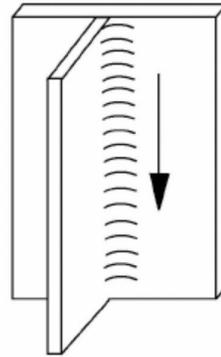
(a) Flat position (F)



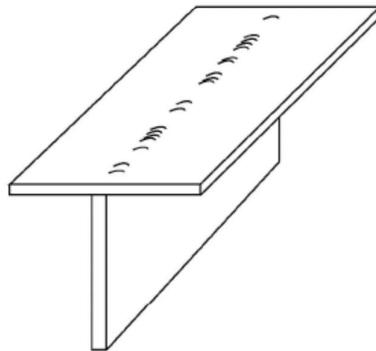
(b) Horizontal position (H)



(c) Vertical upward position (VU)

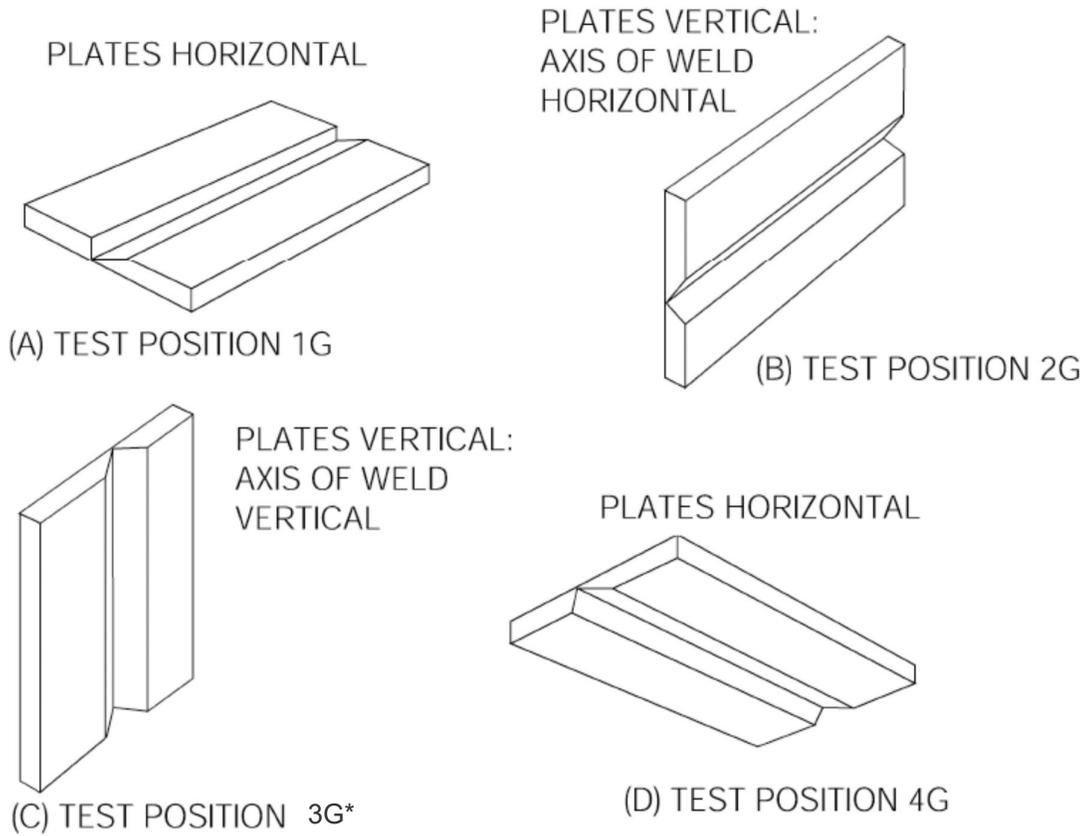


(d) Vertical downward position (VD)



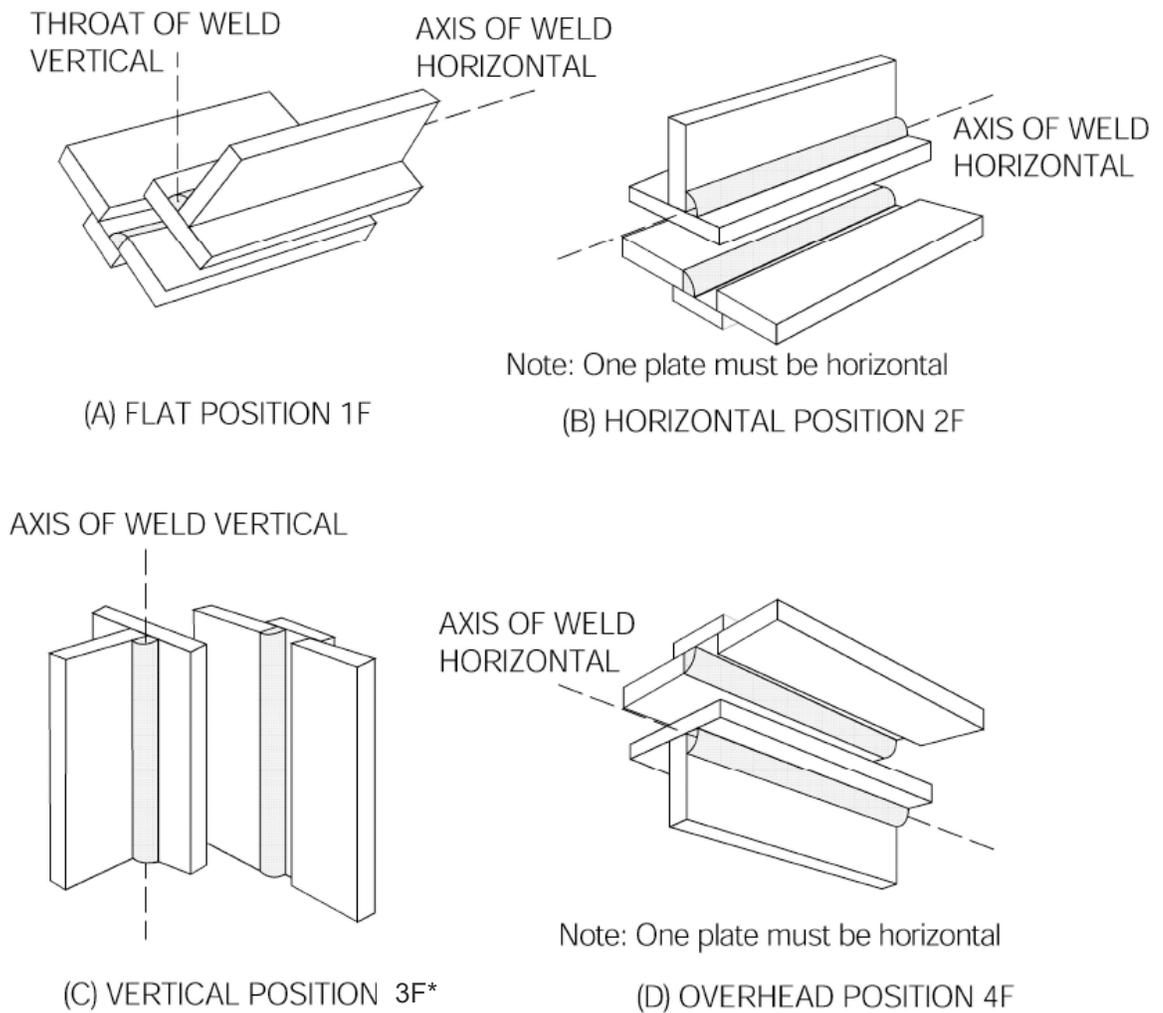
(e) Overhead position (OH)

**Fig. 3.6 (b) Welding positions (Fillet welds)**



- \* 3G-up : The welding position is VU (Butt welds).
- 3G-down : The welding position is VD (Butt welds).

**Fig. 3.6 (c) Test positions (Butt welds)**



- \* 3F-up : The welding position is VU (Fillet welds).
- 3F-down : The welding position is VD (Fillet welds).

**Fig. 3.6 (d) Test positions (Fillet welds)**

3.7 Welders engaged in tack welding should be qualified for either butt welds or fillet welds, for the welding process (Table 3.3) and the position (Table 3.6) corresponding to the joint to be welded. Welders engaged in tack welding works only, would be qualified likewise by IRS.

## Section 4

### Qualification Tests

#### 4.1 General

4.1.1 Welding of the test assemblies and testing of test specimens are to be witnessed by the Surveyor.

#### 4.2 Test assemblies

4.2.1 Test assemblies for butt welds and for fillet welds are to be prepared as shown in Fig. 4.2.1(a) and Fig. 4.2.1(b) in each qualification test.

4.2.2 Testing materials and welding consumables are to conform to one of the following requirements or to be of equivalent grade approved by IRS.

a) Testing materials

- Aluminium alloys for hull construction and marine use specified in Part 2, Chapter 9 of the Rules.

b) Welding consumables

- Consumables for aluminium alloys specified in Part 2, Chapter 11 of the Rules.

#### 4.3 Examination and test

4.3.1 The test assemblies specified in 4.2 are to be examined and tested as follows:

a) For butt welds:

- Visual examination
- Bend test

**Note:** Radiographic tests or fracture tests may be carried out in lieu of bend tests.

b) For fillet welds:

- Visual examination
- Fracture test

**Note:** Two macro sections may be taken in lieu of fracture tests.

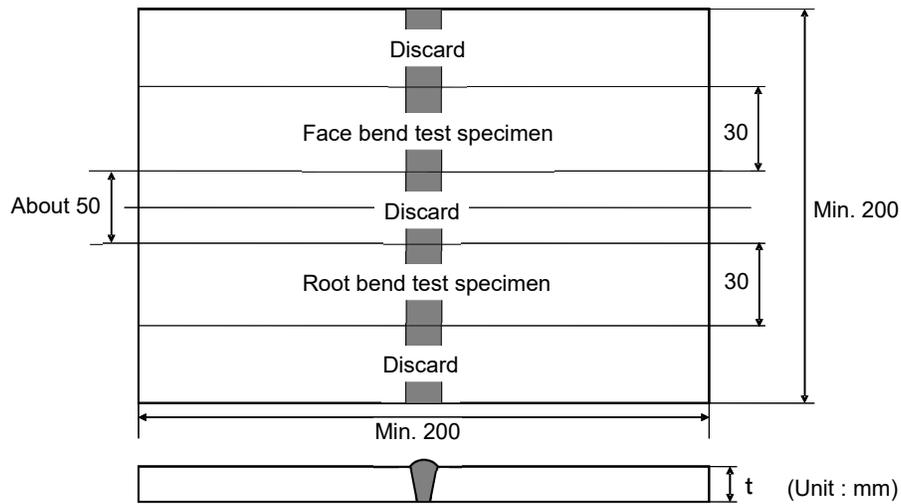


Fig. 4.2.1 (a) Dimensions and types of test assembly for butt welds

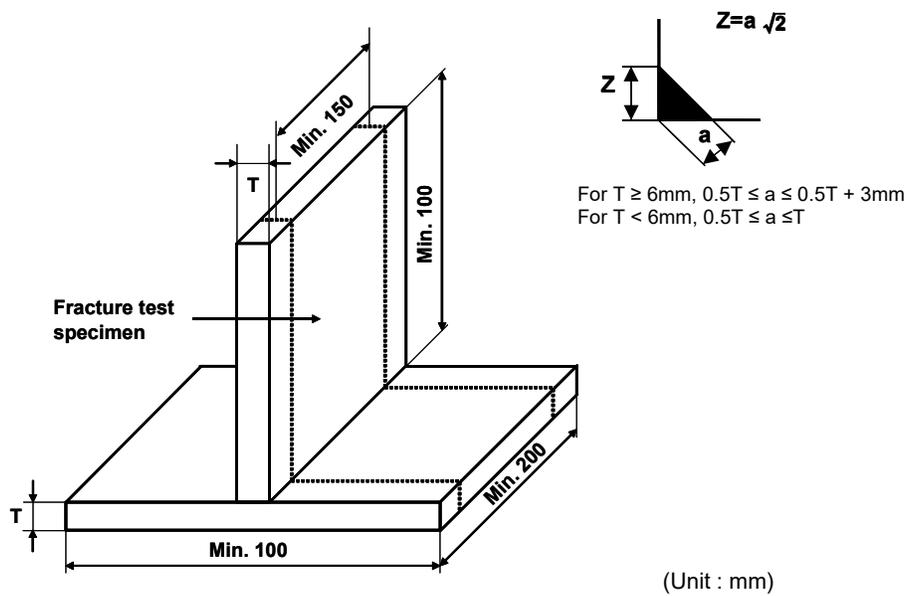


Fig. 4.2.1 (b) Dimensions and types of test assembly for fillet welds

#### 4.3.2 Visual examination

- .1 The welds are to be visually examined prior to cutting of the test specimen for the bend test.
- .2 Welds are to be free from cracks.
- .3 Other imperfections detected are to be assessed in accordance with ISO 10042:2018, level B, except for the following imperfection types for which the level C applies:
  - excess weld metal
  - excess penetration
  - excessive convexity
  - excessive throat thickness

#### 4.3.3 Bend test

- .1 Transverse bend test specimens are to be in accordance with Part 2, Chapter 11 of the Rules.
- .2 The mandrel diameter to thickness ratio (i.e. D/t) is to be that specified for welding consumable (Refer Part 2, Chapter 11 of the Rules) for aluminium alloys.
- .3 The test specimens are to be bent through 180 degrees.
- .4 One face bend test and root bend test specimen are to be tested. For thickness 12mm and over, two side bend specimens may be tested as an alternative.
- .4 After the test, the test specimens should not reveal any open defects in any direction, greater than 3mm. Defects appearing in the corners of a test specimen during testing are to be investigated case by case.

#### 4.3.4 Radiographic examination

- .1 When radiographic testing is used for butt welds, imperfections detected should be assessed in accordance with ISO 10042:2018, level B, except for the following imperfections for which the level C applies:
  - excess weld metal
  - excessive convexity
  - excessive penetration

#### 4.3.5 Fracture test (Butt welds)

- .1 When fracture test is used for butt welds, full test specimen in length is to be tested in accordance with ISO 9017:2017. Imperfections detected should be assessed in accordance with ISO-10042:2018, level B, except for the following imperfections for which the level C applies:
  - excess weld metal
  - excessive convexity
  - excessive penetration

#### 4.3.6 Fracture test (Fillet welds)

- .1 The fracture test is to be performed by folding the upright plate onto the through plate. Evaluation is to concentrate on cracks, porosity and pores, inclusions, lack of fusion and incomplete penetration. Imperfections detected should be assessed in accordance with ISO 10042:2018, level B, except for the following imperfections for which the level C applies:

- excess weld metal
- excessive convexity
- excessive penetration

#### 4.3.7 Macro examination

.1 When macro examination is used for fillet welds, the test specimens are to be prepared and etched on one side to clearly reveal the weld metal, fusion line, root penetration and the heat affected zone.

.2 Macro sections are to include about 10mm of unaffected base metal.

.3 The examination is to reveal a regular weld profile, through fusion between adjacent layers of weld and base metal, sufficient root penetration and the absence of defects such as cracks, lack of fusion etc.

### 4.4 Retest

4.4.1 When a welder fails a qualification test, the following will apply:

4.4.1.1 In cases where the welder fails to meet the requirements in part of the tests, a retest may be conducted immediately, consisting of another test assembly of each type of welded joint and position that the welder failed. In this case, the test is to be done for duplicate test specimens of each failed test. All the retest specimens are to comply with the specified requirements in entirety.

4.4.1.2 In cases where the welder fails to meet the requirements in all parts of the required tests or in the retest prescribed in 4.4.1.1, the welder should be given further training and practice.

4.4.1.3 When there is specific reason to question the welder's ability or the period of effectiveness has lapsed, the welder should be re-qualified in accordance with the tests specified in 4.1 and 4.2.

4.4.2 Where any test specimen does not comply with dimensional specifications due to poor machining, a replacement test assembly should be prepared for testing.

## Section 5

### Period of Validity

#### 5.1 Initial approval

5.1.1 The validity of the welder's approval begins from the date when all the required tests are satisfactorily completed.

5.1.2 A welder's approval will normally remain valid, provided that the certificate or the relevant document is signed at six-month intervals by the shipyards/ manufacturers responsible for weld quality, and that all the following conditions are fulfilled:

- a) The welder should be engaged with reasonable continuity on welding work within the current range of approval. It is recommended that sufficient records/ log be maintained for each welder. An interruption for a period no longer than six months is permissible;
- b) The welder's work should, in general, be in accordance with the technical conditions under which the approval test is carried out;
- c) There should be no specific reason to question the welder's skill and knowledge.

5.1.3 If any of these conditions are not complied with, the approval will be cancelled.

#### 5.2 Extension of approval

5.2.1 The validity of the approval on the certificate may be prolonged for further periods within the original range of approval, provided each of the following conditions in accordance with 5.1.2 are fulfilled and:

- a) the production welds made by the welder are of the required quality;
- b) records of tests, e.g. documentation of radiographic or ultrasonic inspections or test reports on fracture tests or comments of the appointed coordinators, are maintained on file with the welder's approval certificate.

IRS may request tests in order to extend the validity of the approval on the certificate.

5.2.2 Compliance with the above conditions would be verified and extension of the welder's approval certificate be endorsed by the Surveyor.

## Section 6

### Certification

6.1 Each shipyard and manufacturer would be responsible for the control of the validity of the qualification certificate and the range of the approval. Other procedure to control qualifications such as approval of list of qualified welders may be applied at the discretion of IRS.

6.2 The following items would be specified in the qualification certificate:

- a) Range of qualification for materials, welding processes, types of welded joint, plate thicknesses and welding positions;
- b) Expiry date of the validity of the qualification;
- c) Name, date of birth, identification and the photograph of the welder;
- d) Name of shipbuilder / manufacturer.

6.3 The status of approvals of each individual qualification is to be demonstrated to the IRS Surveyor, when requested.

**End of Guidelines**