

CONFORMANCE TRIAL

The first twelve

An invitation to twelve master-and-successor pairs to have a practice recorded permanently and publicly, at no charge, before the standard that governs the record takes effect. This document is written to be forwarded — to a program director, a shop owner, a training trust, or a practitioner deciding whether it is worth the afternoon.

In short. Up to twelve transmissions, conducted in full under the published standard, to establish whether its central requirement can be met at a cost a working shop can carry. Free, with no charge at any later date, and no obligation to continue. The findings are published in full — including the failures — before version 1.0 goes out for comment.

Why a trial, and why now

The register records how skilled work is done: the sequence, the materials as specified rather than named, every tool including how it is dressed or ground and to what geometry, the cues a practitioner reads, the failure modes at the earliest point they can be felt, the conditional judgment, and the reasoning that lets a later practitioner handle a case the record never anticipated. A record conforms only when **a competent practitioner of the same trade, who never met the master, could attempt the practice from the record alone.**

That requirement is written down and has never been met, because no record has yet been made. Everything that follows from the register — whether it can grow, what it costs, whether institutions can rely on it — turns on whether the requirement is attainable in a working shop rather than in principle. A standard that binds everyone before anyone has tried it is a standard nobody has tested.

The timing is not administrative. The practitioners whose knowledge would populate the first records are, in most of these trades, the oldest people in them. A trial deferred is a trial run on a smaller population.

What is measured, and what would end it

Two criteria are fixed in advance and published so that they cannot be adjusted afterwards to suit the result.

Measure	Fails at	What failing it would mean
Share of records reaching conformance without a second, register-led interview	Below 60%	The design premise is wrong. The standard places elicitation with the successor, on the reasoning that a competent beginner asks what a practitioner has stopped noticing. If most records need a professional interviewer, the register is a services business with a modest ceiling and should be described as one.
Median days from capture to the master's line-by-line ratification	Above 45	The design does not fit the pace of a working shop. Ratification is the step that cannot be delegated or hurried, and a corpus that accrues at this rate cannot outrun the loss it exists to answer.

Three further figures are recorded and published without a pass mark attached, because they are what a later reader will need: registrar hours per record, the points at which the elicitation protocol broke down, and every respect in which the standard itself proved unworkable.

TERMS

What a participant gives and receives

Given	Received
The successor asks the scripted questions, during teaching that is happening anyway.	A permanent public record of the practice, exported daily and mirrored by independent parties, which outlives the register itself.
The master sits once, unhurried, to ratify the record line by line. Nothing enters it that the master has not confirmed as their own statement.	A permanent identifying number for both master and successor, citable for the rest of a working life.
A license permitting publication of the method under a share-alike license, so that it may be copied, mirrored and translated. No know-how changes hands and nothing becomes the registrar's property.	A complete copy of everything captured, theirs outright.
An honest account of where the process was tedious, intrusive or simply wrong.	No charge for this, for maintaining standing, or for anything later — a requirement of the published standard rather than an introductory offer.
Nothing else. There is no fee, no membership, and no obligation to continue.	When version 1.0 takes effect the record issues as an ordinary record carrying its original dates, not marked as a trial. Going first costs nothing.

What publishes, and what does not

The method publishes. A sponsor may seal permanently its own drawings, tolerances, material specifications and formulations, customer information, and jig and fixture dimensions. A record may publish without naming the sponsor, the master or the place of work, at no cost, and a name may be withheld or withdrawn at any time. Where proprietary material and method cannot be separated in one document, the document is sealed and a redacted record publishes in its place.

What cannot be done is to record a method and keep it. A method nobody may follow preserves nothing, and a register holding such records would be an archive of secrets rather than a record of practice. Any party unwilling to accept publication on these terms should not take part, and is told so before the first session rather than after the record exists.

Eligibility

- **A pair already working.** One person who holds a practice and one person currently learning it from them. The teaching must be happening regardless; the trial records it and does not arrange it.
- **A program that runs pairs.** A folklife apprenticeship, a training trust, a trade association or an employer running its own succession may nominate up to three pairs.
- **Any building or industrial craft within the published domains.** Masonry and lime work, plaster, timber framing, joinery, slate and metal roofing, stained glass, architectural ironwork, gilding and sign lettering, conservation, terrazzo and mosaic; machining, toolmaking, pattern making and foundry, millwright work, boiler and pressure-vessel work, instrument making, pipe organ building, precision optics. Health and care work is outside the standard entirely.
- **Trades nearest to disappearing are taken first,** by reference to the published assessment — forty-eight trades measured against federal data by a rule anyone may re-run, of which three are assessed

critically endangered, twelve endangered, and eight not assessable at all because no federal occupation code reaches them — alongside ten further named practices that reach no code either.

METHOD

The five acts, and who performs each

Act	Who	What happens
I · Map	Master, successor, sponsor	Each practice to be transmitted is listed with its observable outcome, its materials and tools, a risk rating and a session estimate. Signed by all parties before teaching begins. A list of practice names is not a map.
II · Transmit	Master and successor	Teaching proceeds as it would anyway. Sessions are logged. The successor writes each practice up in their own words as it is learned, and it is not evaluated for quality.
III · Elicit	Successor asks, master answers	A scripted protocol draws out what the master knows. Where the successor's attempt diverges from the master's, the divergence is put to the master as a question — failure in transmission is the primary source of what has never been said aloud. Questions declined are recorded as declined.
IV · Prove	Successor performs, master judges	The successor performs each practice. The master states whether it was performed to the master's own standard. No external standard is applied and none is implied.
V · Ratify	Master	The master reads the record back line by line and confirms that it says what they said. Corrections are made before ratification, and a corrected field records that it was corrected.

The heavy hours fall where they already were — the teaching, and the successor's own attempt. What the trial adds is structure, a permanent public deposit, and the questions.

What the register is, and is not

The register does not assess skill, license anyone to practice, certify competence, or warrant workmanship, and says so on every use of its mark. A record states that a transmission occurred and who attested it. The only judgment recorded anywhere is the master's, and it is recorded as the master's.

The corpus is published under a share-alike license and may be copied, mirrored and translated by anyone. The register's public fields are exported in full every day, and independent parties are invited to hold complete mirrors — libraries, archives, trade bodies and universities in preference to commercial hosts. The register survives by being copied rather than by being kept.

Applying. The trial page carries a short form that produces a written application, reviewable before it is sent and sent by ordinary email. No account is created, nothing is stored, and there is no follow-up unless it is asked for. An application names the trade, the people, and — most usefully — what would be lost if the practice stopped.

Root & Branch Register Inc. · Conformance trial prospectus, September 2026. Conducted under §12.7 of the Root & Branch Transmission Standard, version 0.9, which limits the trial to twelve transmissions, requires each to be conducted in full conformance, provides that completed transmissions issue as ordinary Records under version 1.0 carrying their original dates, and requires the findings to be published before 1.0 goes out for comment. Where this document and the Standard differ, the Standard governs.