

Non Domestic Energy Assessor Quality Assurance Requirements England, Wales & Northern Ireland Effective Date 1st July 2012

Sampling Approach

Random Sampling

Overall, a minimum of 2% of lodged EPCs must be audited by Schemes through a process of random sampling. The method of assessing these EPCs will be a desk-based audit which complies with the requirements set out in this document.

All assessors will be subject to a minimum audit of one EPC per six month period, unless there are no lodgements in that six month period. The six month periods are: January 1st to June 30th, and July 1st to December 31st.

All new members will be assessed within their first 30 days of membership. If no EPCs are lodged during this period, the first available EPC will be audited. Following this, the sampling rate for new members will be a minimum of 5% of lodged EPCs during the first six months of their membership. 'New members' are those who are:

- a) New to the EPBD
- b) Or new to the Scheme, unless they are currently members of a Scheme or Schemes and that checks with all Schemes which they have Membership or have found that the individual is not subject to heightened QA by another Scheme
- c) Or have not lodged in the previous six months

There is a minimum requirement that at least 1% of EPC's are audited over the year.

Targeted Sampling

In the event that an assessor fails their initial audit, they will be subject to the targeted auditing of two further EPCs lodged within the 30 day period prior to the initial audit failure. If this is not possible, the Scheme will select two EPCs for audit from the subsequent 30 days or the next two EPCs to be lodged if this time period is exceeded.

Additional Audits

In addition to random and targeted audits (detailed above), a Scheme is expected to request additional audits under the following circumstances:



Consumer Complaints – These would normally result in an audit of the EPC in question.

High Lodgement Rates – Where an assessor lodges a particularly high number of EPCs in a 3 month period, the Scheme is expected to undertake checks to ensure that the assessor has visited the properties.

Excessive Use of the Support Team – Assessors that make excessive use of the Support Team or, in the opinion of the Scheme, ask questions which show a potential lack of basic understanding, may be subject to an additional audit request.

Other Risk Factors – Where a Scheme is concerned that an assessor may be at high risk of producing a defective certificate, the next EPC lodged by the assessor may be requested for audit and, depending on the level of risk, the assessor's sampling rate may be increased.

Failure of Audits

If an assessor passes both targeted audits triggered by the initial audit failure, they will revert to the audit schedule appropriate to their status as either a new or established member.

If an assessor fails one of the two targeted audits triggered by the initial audit failure, the Scheme will make a judgement as to the remedial action, based on the seriousness of the failure. This may result in a request for additional auditing, the need for CPD or an accompanied site visit with a representative of the Scheme. If the error is strongly indicative of fraudulent practices, in which case the member should be suspended pending further investigation.

If an assessor fails both of the two targeted audits triggered by the initial audit failure, the assessor is automatically suspended until the Scheme is satisfied that appropriate remedial action has been taken to correct the assessor's lack of knowledge.

Auditing Regime after Return from Suspension

If the Scheme is satisfied that the failure of both targeted audits is due to issues of a minor nature, the assessor will revert to the audit schedule appropriate to their status as either a new or established member.

In all other cases, the assessor will be subject to whichever is the greater of the following:

- A 10% clear auditing regime for a period of six months, subject to the audit of at least five EPCs during this period; or
- An audit of five clear EPCs within the six month period following a return to lodgement.



Should five EPCs not be lodged within six months, the next 5 EPCs lodged will be selected

Provision of QA Evidence

Requests for QA audits will be sent out to Assessors via e-mail.

Assessors must ensure that all necessary evidence is submitted to Elmhurst **within 15 working days** of the initial request.

Evidence should be submitted via the QA Hub, where a limit of 100MG has been set or post with hard copies of the evidence required. Photographs and SBEM software files may be submitted on CD or by one single email (subject to a maximum file size of 5Mb)

Where an assessor is on leave, off sick or some similar reason, and it is not possible to meet the fifteen working day submission limit, a time extension can be allowed, at the Scheme's discretion, which will allow the assessor 5 further working days to provide the requested evidence after their return to work. In order for this to be considered, the assessor must contact the Scheme prior to the expiry of the initial fifteen working day period.

Failure to provide the requested evidence within fifteen working days of the original request, or a reasonable case for its non-availability will result in the immediate suspension of the assessor.

Where a suspended assessor subsequently provides the requested evidence, they will also be subject to one additional audit which will either be selected from all EPCs lodged within the previous two months or one of the next five lodged by the assessor.

Audit Feedback

In all instances of an EPC audit, the Scheme will provide feedback to the assessor via e-mail.

Accuracy Requirements

The BER rating (sum of absolute errors) shall be judged to be correct if the EA's assessment is within either 5 kgCO₂/m² of the rating calculated by the QAA, or 10 % of the BER rating calculated by the QAA. In all other instances the BER rating, and hence the EPC, shall be judged to be defective, and the audit marked as a fail.

The quality and availability of the evidence must be such that the QA assessment can be replicated by an approved external QA assessor.

Certificates are deemed to be defective and should be replaced if:

- The number of zones is insufficient to accurately describe the building
- The sum of the absolute errors between the assessor's and the QA auditor's BER rating exceeds these accuracy requirements, or in the case where it is the QA assessors judgement that the certificate is defective (e.g. incorrect number of zones, sufficient errors in sample associated with a building having more than ten zones)
- The QA auditor believes that recommendations have been incorrectly added or removed
- Errors in the building's description would result in a change in the recommendations made
- The building's description is sufficiently inaccurate that it brings into question the accuracy of the rating
- The evidence provided to justify the EPC is deemed insufficient by the scheme (i.e. does not allow the EPC to be recreated by the QA assessor)
- The evidence provided is insufficient to justify the use of default values and the amendment of software generated recommendations

Mandatory Re-lodgement of Defective EPCs

If an audited EPC is deemed to be 'defective', the assessor will be informed and a mandatory re-lodgement of the EPC will be required. The assessor must request, by email, the removal of the defective EPC and notify the scheme of the RRN of the replacement EPC.

The assessor must ensure that the mandatory re-lodgement is completed **within 10 working days** of notification by the Scheme. An extension may be allowed to cover a period of up to 5 days in the event of the EA being ill, on holiday etc subject to prior approval with EES. Failure to comply within this timescale will result in the suspension of the assessor and continued refusal to replace the defective certificate may lead to expulsion from the Scheme.

Appeals Process

Should an assessor wish to challenge the result of a QA audit, appeals should be forwarded to our QA Administrator at ndea-ga@elmhurstenergy.co.uk, stating the reasons why the assessor believes that the audit result is incorrect.

Please note that failure due to the non-provision of mandatory survey evidence, or provision of insufficient evidence, does not constitute grounds for appeal.



Expulsion from the Scheme

Where an assessor does not respond appropriately to the suspension process, or where there are repeated incidents of suspension which demonstrate a lack of competence or failure of corrective actions, the assessor may face expulsion from the Scheme.