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**Revision History**

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# **Domestic EPC Quality Assurance**

## **Overview**

As an Accreditation Scheme, we are responsible for ensuring that the quality of work carried out by our members is of a consistently good standard. In a relatively new sector such as that of Energy Performance Certificates, it is important that high standards are established and maintained throughout every strand of the industry. This will help maintain the credibility of the EPC as an important document for both cutting carbon emissions and reducing energy consumption in households and businesses within the U.K. It's vital that these high standards are implemented; both by us as an Accreditation Scheme, and you as an Energy Assessor.

## **Quality Assurance Requests**

We will help sustain quality in the industry by regularly asking our members to submit work for Quality Assurance checking. By auditing every one of our members, we can help ensure that energy assessors operating under our scheme are fully aware of the standards and professional conduct expected of them.

### **As a general rule, the following QA requirements are in place:**

- A minimum 2% of all EPCs lodged through the scheme are audited
- Every active member is audited every yearly quarter
- Members are audited on at least 1% of their lodged reports
- Each new member is audited within 30 days of joining the scheme

### **The following instances will also instigate auditing requirements:**

- Excessive use of the Quidos help desk
- Customer complaints
- High lodgement rates (in excess of 120 lodgements a month)

### **QA checking is processed in the following manner:**

1. Requests are sent out at the beginning of each month
2. Assessors will be given the RRN number/s of the reports required for audit, and be expected to submit full and complete data from the survey
3. Failure to provide the necessary information within 15 working days of the initial request will result in suspension from the scheme
4. If a suspended assessor subsequently provides the required information, then the assessor is re-instated and the next two reports completed audited

## Minimum Requirements

As a practicing member of the Quidos Accreditation Scheme you are expected to keep detailed records of all EPCs lodged. These records must be of a professional standard, and enable us to adequately audit the submitted work. The fundamental underlying principle of Quality Assurance is this; the scheme should be able to reproduce the EPC solely from the evidence provided by the assessor. Whenever you upload your files, ask yourself whether or not you would be able to recreate the EPC fully from your evidence. If you would not be able to, then the auditor almost certainly wouldn't. If you do not provide evidence for a given element, i.e. TRVs, then the auditor has to proceed and complete the audit as though the particular element is not present, which will often result in an audit failure.

For Quality Assurance checking, we require the following minimum evidence provided:

- **Field sheets** – tidy and accurate field sheets with all evidence included, allowing the scheme to assess the accuracy of the RdSAP entries. Should also include justification for any decision undertaken which is not clear from the other evidence.
- **Site Plan** – a sketch plan covering all levels, annotated with measurements, areas and HLP.
- **Completed EPC** – the completed certificate lodged onto Landmark.
- **Photographic evidence** – assessors are required to take photographs of the below elements when they are present at a particular property, and upload the original photos for auditing when required. Where possible photographs should provide context for other elements of property, i.e. build age.
  - Front/rear/side elevations
  - Evidence of wall insulation
  - Evidence of wall thickness (image should provide context to thickness of wall)
  - Roof construction
  - Openings – windows, chimneys etc
  - Loft insulation (providing evidence of insulation depth)
  - Primary heating system(s)
  - Heating controls
  - Secondary heating system(s)
  - Hot water cylinder and stat
  - Electricity/gas meters
  - Low energy lighting
  - Conservatory (showing whether separated)
  - Evidence of heated corridor for flats/maisonettes
  - Any other key feature not covered above (i.e. solar panels, wind turbines)
- **Additional evidence** – this should include justification for why key element associated with the inspection have not been completed (for example not accessing

the loft), and also any secondary documentation used to justify the overwriting of any of the default values within the software (for example solar panel information, wall/room-in-roof U-Values).

This evidence must be clear and concise and of a high enough standard to enable the auditor to review the work. Photographic evidence is of particular importance – it must be provided for all of the aspects listed above where applicable. If the photographic evidence is deemed to be of underwhelming quality then the assessor will be warned that more care is required in future. If it is deemed that the evidence provided is not of sufficient quality to allow accurate auditing, then the work cannot be audited, and the assessor will require further targeted QA.

As detailed in your membership agreement, it is essential that assessors keep the records of each EPC both secure and readily accessible. We will not accept excuses related to missing Q/A information.

### Report auditing

Once the work has been submitted it will be audited by a member of the Quidos Quality Assurance team. The auditor will review the work and establish whether or not the EPC is either acceptable or defective, and provide the assessor with a feedback report for the audit. A report will be considered defective if it fulfils one of the following three criteria:

- The sum of the absolute errors between the energy assessor's and QA assessor's SAP score is more than 5 SAP points. This does not allow for 'self-corrective errors'.
- If errors in the building's description would result in a change in the recommendations made.
- If the building's description is sufficiently inaccurate such that it brings into question the accuracy of the rating by the seller. 'Sufficiently inaccurate' is taken to mean information on the EPC which is demonstrably incorrect subject to an ability to change the description in the software to account for what the assessor has seen.

In the event that the report is declared defective then it will need to be cancelled and re-lodged with the correct information in place. The onus is on the assessor themselves to do this, and the auditor will contact the assessor with details of how this needs to be done. In addition to cancelling and re-lodging the defective certificate, the assessor will also now be identified as requiring targeted QA.

### Targeted QA

Any assessor who fails a QA check or does not provide enough information required by the "Minimum Evidence Requirements" will require additional monitoring. This will consist of the auditing of a further two EPCs lodged within the 30 day period both prior to and following the audit failure, or two reports lodged in the 30 days following the feedback. If

this is not possible then the next two EPCs lodged by the EA should be selected. The following principles apply:

- If both audits are passed then the assessor will return to normal QA checking
- If one audit is failed then the scheme will make a judgement as to what remedial action is required dependant on the severity of the errors made
- If both audits are failed then the assessor is automatically suspended from the scheme, until clear that remedial action is undertaken. Upon return to the scheme, escalation procedures are implemented that will see the assessor audited on 10% of EPCs lodged for the following six months. If the assessor does not take required remedial action, then they may be expelled from the scheme.

Where an energy assessor is identified as requiring remedial training Qidos will identify the requirements and ensure that the remedial training is undertaken. There is no specified time period attached to this, and Qidos will ensure that an appropriate training and compliance regime is completed which enables the assessor to demonstrate their competence.

### Moving forward

In applying these strict Quality Assurance requirements, we are helping to ensure that quality is considered paramount in the Energy Performance industry. Energy Assessors should take pride in the quality of their work, and know that the higher the quality of Certificate they produce, the more they are contributing to helping cut the U.K.'s carbon emissions and domestic energy usage. The better the standard of product that is produced, the more respectable and professional our industry will become.

We understand that this extra level of administration will add to the workload of a DEA, but we are confident that all energy assessors will appreciate the benefits of a quality product.

## EPC Auditing process

