



Title: DEC QA Standards
Ref: QQAS003
Issue: v.5.0
Issued By: Jonathan Ellis **Date:** 19/02/2015
Approved By: Philip Salaman **Date:** 19/02/2015

Revision History

Issue	Issued	Approved	Reviewed
1.0	01/04/2011	01/04/2011	
2.0	17/08/2011	17/08/2011	17/10/2012
3.0	07/03/2014	07/03/2014	
4.0	09/02/2015	09/02/2015	
5.0	19/02/2015	19/02/2015	

Display Energy Certificate 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 Display Energy 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 DEC as an important document for both cutting carbon emissions and reducing energy consumption in public buildings 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 DEC's lodged through the scheme are audited
- Every active member is audited every yearly half
- Each new member has their first report audited

The following instances will also instigate auditing requirements:

- Excessive use of the Quidos help desk
- Consumer complaints
- High lodgement rates (in excess of 25 Combined DEC or more than 100 renewal DEC lodgements a month)

QA checking will be processed in the following manner:

1. Requests will be 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 a previous DEC lodged within past two months audited

Minimum Requirements

As a practicing member of the Quidos Accreditation Scheme you are expected to keep detailed records of all DEC's lodged. These records must be of a professional standard, and enable us to adequately audit the submitted work. These are the minimum standards expected of you as an accredited Energy Assessor.

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

- **Data file** – the data file from the software used to create the DEC
- **Field sheets** – tidy and accurate field sheets with all evidence included, allowing the scheme to assess the accuracy of the SBEM entries
- **Floor Plan** – consisting of architectural drawings, annotated with floor measurements
- **Completed DEC** – the completed certificate lodged onto Landmark
- **Photographic evidence** – minimum of: Aerial view of building (from Google), evidence of LZC technologies, presence of metering/sub-metering, any other key features which may affect the OR rating
- **Additional evidence** – Any utility bills (from the building), meter readings (from the building) and energy consumption data (to clearly show this has been provided by the client)
- **Recommendation justification** – explanation for any recommendation editing

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. 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 DEC 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 DEC 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 criteria:

- The sum of the absolute errors between the DEC Assessor's and QA Assessor's OR rating is more than 5%.

- The DEC Assessor has selected an incorrect benchmark, measurement or assessment period (without adequate justification).
- The DEC Assessor has made inaccurate assumptions about or failed to justify the separable energy use.
- The DEC Assessor has inaccurately represented the Total Usable Floor Area or the Energy Consumption.
- The DEC Assessor has failed to use the appropriate CIP
- If errors in the building's description/survey for the Advisory Report 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 OR or the Advisory Report by the customer. 'Sufficiently inaccurate' is taken to mean information on the DEC or Advisory Report which is demonstrably incorrect subject to an ability to change the description in the software to account for what the assessor has seen
- The standard of English reached within the Advisory Report is unacceptable
- If the evidence provided to justify the DEC or Advisory Report is deemed insufficient (i.e. would not allow the DEC or Advisory Report to be recreated by the QA Assessor). This would include justification for the use of default values and the amendment of or addition to software generated recommendations. Should this situation arise the Addendum stipulates the enhanced QA sampling rate CLG would expect to see implemented.
- In the case of an Asset Rating DEC if the period of occupation is greater than 15 months from the 1st day of occupation to the nominated date.
- In the case of a Year 2 DEC if the assessor has not visited the site but cannot provide evidence that they created the 1st year DEC **and** that nothing has changed in the period since this was created. The same principle applies in subsequent years.
- In the case of a default DEC if the assessor has not provided sufficient evidence that this is an appropriate rating

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 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 DEC’s lodged within the 30 day period prior to the audit failure. If this is not possible then two reports lodged in the 30 days following audit feedback are requested, or two DEC’s from the subsequent 30 days if this is not possible. 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 EPC’s 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 Quidos will identify the requirements and ensure that the remedial training is undertaken. There is no specified time period attached to this, and Quidos 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 DEC assessor, but we are confident that all energy assessors will appreciate the benefits of a quality product.

DEC Auditing process

