

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
- 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 120 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 EPC 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 EPCs 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 EPC:

- **Field sheets** – tidy and accurate field sheets with all evidence included, allowing the scheme to assess the accuracy of the RdSAP entries
- **Site Plan** – a sketch plan covering all levels, annotated with measurements, areas and HLP
- **Completed EPC** – the completed certificate lodged onto Landmark
- **Photographic evidence** – minimum of: front/rear/side elevations, heating systems/controls, water heating systems, meters, insulation, any other key features. Photos must be dated to avoid the use of stock images.

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 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 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 prior to the audit failure, or two EPCs 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 EPCs lodged for the following six months. If the assessor does not take required remedial action, then they may be expelled from the scheme.

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

