



***Sterling Accreditation Limited***  
*Setting the Standard*

## **Assessor Monitoring Procedures**

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## **1.0 Monitoring Requirements**

As part of an ongoing process of Quality Assurance Sterling Accreditation monitors a sample of all Energy Assessments submitted and lodged.

These monitoring standards are to allow Sterling Accreditation to comply with the delivery of legal and quasi legal requirements (for example, to comply with the standards laid down by CLG on the Assessor Monitoring (QA) requirements for Accreditation Schemes).

As a quality Scheme, Sterling Accreditation aims to exceed the QA minimum requirements as prescribed by CLG.

Each Energy Assessor must keep records of their inspections for their own QA purposes, regardless of the Sterling Accreditation monitoring process, for a period of at least 15 years.

The core standard is that it must be possible for an independent Energy Assessor to generate a consistent assessment report with a similar outcome/result using this evidence in line with the following minimum Quality Standard.

## **2.0 Scope of Monitoring Audit**

Each Sterling Accredited Energy Assessor has a random proportion of their lodged energy assessments audited by an approved and experienced senior Registered Energy Assessor qualified at or above the standard being assessed.

### **2.1 Audit Sampling**

The number of lodged energy assessments being tested and desk checked depends on the number that the Energy Assessor submits during their membership year.

For existing Energy Assessors, a minimum of one energy assessment in each quarter, in which there is a lodgement, is audited with an overall target of at least 1% of their total lodgements over their membership year.

New Energy Assessors have their first report tested and checked within the first 30 days of lodgement and at least 2% of reports lodged within the first six months.

Overall as a Scheme Sterling Accreditation will ensure that there is at least 2% random sampling over a calendar year, not including any targeted audits as detailed in Section a below.

- a. The monitoring audit is selected randomly each month throughout the year to allow for a close level of monitoring and to detect if there are any concerns, issues or areas where corrective action has been identified.



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An additional higher level of auditing (increased sampling – ‘target auditing’) of an Energy Assessor’s Lodgements is required if:

- There is excessive use of the Technical Helpdesk
  - An existing audited report fails the success criteria as define below
  - There is a complaint about a Report
  - If Sterling Accreditation view the Assessor to be in a ‘high risk’ category
  - If there is an excessively high level of lodgements submitted by an Energy Assessor
- b. The Energy Assessor is requested to submit all records and information, that was used to produce the lodged energy audit, held on the central database under the RRN or CRN and this includes:
- i. Instruction letters for the audit
  - ii. Building site notes from audit - commentary on design data, including reasons for professional judgments.
  - iii. Photographic records of the building and audit (see Appendix A for further details)
  - iv. Drawings and sketches from the audit building. This should consist of a sketch plan covering all levels, annotated with measurements, areas and HLP.
  - v. Electronic file SBEM NCT (or similar), ORCal ORC or Air Con output
  - vi. Copy of the certificate issued and the report
  - vii. In the case of a DEC as well as the above, certified floor area and energy data
  - viii. In the case of Air Conditioning Energy assessments, as well as the above, details of the F Gas register and asset list of A/C plant.

The Energy Assessor must provide within the site notes (or design commentary notes in the case of on construction) anything used in support of:

- Confirming data input or decision making that cannot be substantiated by other sources of evidence
- Reflective thought, or amendments to recommendations (identifying property age, construction, assessing primary heating system etc), which is not provided through other sources of evidence.

For clarification of the evidence requirements for Domestic Reports, please refer to Appendix B below.

- c. The QA Energy Assessor reviews all the documents submitted with the audit under review and determines if the assumptions and records verify the information that was inputted into the software including specific measurements, energy data, fabric types and regional data.
- d. The testing of the energy assessment establishes if there is any detectable omission or errors inputted to the software and the effect that each individual error has in the energy assessment and performance rating issued. A points deviation of up to 5 points is acceptable within the A to G scale, however this is a total score which consists of a change in the rating due to an error of -2 points on one issue and a +3 points on a different error but the number of total points difference is 5.



The criteria to judge whether a Report is deemed to be satisfactory are as follows:

**For Domestic**

EPC Rating	A Certificate should be within +/-5 SAP points of the EPC rating "truth"
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**For On Construction Domestic**

DER (Dwellings Emission Rate) Rating	A Certificate should be within +/- 4% of the DER rating "truth"
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**For EPC Levels 3, 4 and 5**

EPC Rating	A Certificate should be within +/-5% of the EPC rating "truth" <b>AND</b>
BER (Building Emission Rate) Rating	A Certificate should also be within +/- 10% of the BER rating "truth"

- e. A successful energy assessment with no errors or omissions in the QA monitoring assessment would show a zero points difference.
- f. The QA monitoring audit identifies areas where there are concerns with the energy assessment process or procedure which would not have affected the energy rating but still need to be corrected in future lodgements. Each QA monitoring audit is recorded and a report is fed back to the Energy Assessor to make them aware of the issues and where appropriate to take corrective actions in future energy assessments.
- g. Where the QA audit has identified a failure which results in a point difference of 6 or more, the Energy Assessor must withdraw the energy audit and rerun the energy assessment with the corrected action in place and then resubmit this for lodgement. At the same time the Energy Assessor notifies the client of the action taken and provides them with the corrected rating and reports. After a report fails a QA assessment, the next two reports that the Assessor lodges are subjected to a QA check, as set out below.



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- h. Retraining may be recommended on the basis of continual poor performance as a consequence of this audit process. A more detailed audit may be requested as a consequence of this audit process, which may include the Energy Assessor's procedures within his business and a site audit of the actual building the energy assessment was based on.

### Site Monitoring Quality Assessment:

There will be occasions where a site monitoring quality assessment will need to be undertaken by an appropriate Energy Assessor to check the original energy assessment and to determine if there are any concerns or issues with the original energy assessment. The circumstances that would lead to a site monitoring QA assessment would be:

- a. Significant failure of a Desk Top QA assessment which highlighted major problems with the building and the performance of the original energy assessment but where there were unusual characteristics with the building and a site audit is considered the only practical way of resolving a compliance test.
- b. An energy rating is challenged by a third party, which has called in to question the validity of the original energy assessment and energy performance of the rating.
- c. A formal complaint received by Sterling Accreditation about the level of service and performance of a registered Energy Assessor under the Sterling Accreditation Scheme and there is doubt about the energy rating issued.
- d. Sterling Accreditation suspends a registered Energy Assessor under its Accreditation Scheme and considers that a retest of an energy assessment is required by a registered Energy Assessor.
- e. A previous energy assessment undertaken by a registered Energy Assessor under the Sterling Accreditation Scheme has subsequently been re-audited by a different accreditation scheme and the previous energy assessment has been challenged.

### **3.0 An Organisational Audit (OA):**

- The OA encompasses an office visit to the licensed Energy Assessor's organisation. The Energy Assessor's performance is reviewed against the Code of Conduct and other mandatory policy documentation to which the Energy Assessor should be adhering to
- This process may be undertaken in order to investigate an alleged impropriety or complaint.



#### **4.0 Provision Supporting Information:**

In respect of all auditing activities, Sterling Accreditation reserves the right to request further supporting information or to escalate the audit stage to a higher level such as:

- 4.1 Site audit and reassessment of the energy performance of the building
- 4.2 Organisational Audit

This request for more supportive information may temporarily stall the lodgement process whilst Sterling undertakes additional investigations.

#### **5.0 Minimum Quality Standard**

Failure to Comply with Minimum Quality Standards

In the event that a Registered Energy Assessor, after going through the monitoring process, is found to produce work that is outside the acceptance standards of the Sterling Accreditation Scheme; NOS Standards; and the Sterling Accreditation Code of Conduct and procedures, required of an Energy Assessor at that standard and for that level of accreditation then the following applies:

- a. The monitored assessment is reproduced by the Energy Assessor and the amended certificate is re-issued to the client and re-lodged with the register
- b. A further two assessments are monitored from the Energy Assessor to ensure quality standards are being upheld
- c. If the further assessments fall outside the acceptance standards for monitoring as detailed in Section 2 and 3 of the quality assurance procedures as above, then the Energy Assessor is required to submit a further report for quality assurance monitoring
- d. If the third consecutive report is deemed unacceptable the Energy Assessor is placed under suspension following further investigation. Potential resultant actions are as follows:-
  - I. Referral to the Disciplinary Committee (as detailed in the Sterling Disciplinary and Appeal Procedure document)
  - II. Compulsory retraining is specified and set by Sterling Accreditation
  - III. The Assessor is revoked from the Scheme and the National Register informed.



Appendix A –

**Minimum photographic and documentary evidence for existing non-domestic premises (where practical)**

- Ariel view of building from Google maps or similar that clearly identifies the building and site layout to confirm orientation
- Evidence in support of activities stipulated within zones
- All external elevations: front, rear and sides
- Constructions – i.e. cavity or solid wall with presence or not of insulation, all different types covered.
- Glazing types, including the g-value (EN ISO 410) and shading
- Roof construction and roof lights

For each HVAC system depending on the system type: ‘effective heat generator seasonal efficiency’, Generator Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER) and Generator Nominal Energy Efficiency Ratio (EER), chiller and generator type, heat recovery system, presence of fans and pumps along with pump power and/or SFP, fuel type and controls. (including HVAC manufacturer/make/model numbers and any third party evidence of calculations).

- Heat/cool emitters within zone/areas
- Controls within zone/areas  
HWS type, efficiency, fuel, volume and/or storage losses, pump power, secondary circulation
- Lighting within zones and controls
- Evidence of LZC technologies and relevant data
- Sub-metering
- Power factor correction
- Accredited details
- Any other key feature of the building or limitation whose presence or absence may affect the EPC rating or which would be required to support any claim made in the report that could be subsequently queried or be the subject of a complaint

Where the Energy Assessor believes that photographs are not practically achievable, but a particular element / energy using device is present, site notes must explain why the photographic evidence is not available.

Photographs should be dated within the image to avoid the use of stock images. Electronic files are only acceptable if there is a ‘foolproof’ means of dating the file.

Photographs must not be blurred or distorted. They should provide sufficient photographic evidence to enable the EPC to be properly audited against CLG’s accuracy targets.



Appendix B –

**Minimum Evidence Required for Domestic Report QA**

Data file, and / or RDSAP Data Collection Forms, relating to information used by DEA to calculate EPC, which allows Scheme QA Assessors to assess the accuracy of the EPC against each stage of data entry associated with RdSAP.

Floor Plan

Site notes – paper or electronic file

The DEA must provide within the site notes anything used in support of decision making, reflective thought, or amendments to recommendations (identifying property age, construction, assessing primary heating system etc), which is not provided through other sources of evidence.

Photographic evidence requirements.

Photographs should be dated within the image to avoid the use of stock images  
They should not be blurred or distorted in any way.

Minimum Requirements (where accessible – if not, the reason must be given in site notes):

- Front elevation
- Side elevation for detached / semi-detached
- Cavity Wall Insulation – evidence
- Roof construction
- Openings – windows, chimneys etc (if previous photographs do not provide sufficient evidence)
- Primary Heating System (e.g. boiler showing any associated key features such as a condensate pipe or label indicating the boiler model)
- Secondary Heating System

Other photographs may be supplied to support site notes, including:

- Heating System control system
- Hot water cylinder
- Electric Meter
- LPG Cylinder
- Loft Insulation which gives evidence of the depth of insulation
- Evidence of wall thickness
- Conservatory – photographic evidence of whether it is separated or not
- Low energy light fittings

Any other key feature of the building or limitation whose presence or absence may be reasonably considered likely to affect the SAP rating or which would be required to support any claim made in the report that could be subsequently queried or be the subject of a complaint

Any other evidence required to justify the suppression or inclusion of additional recommendations. Examples of this might be a guarantee or a building control notice for improvements