

CIBSE CERTIFICATION ANNUAL REPORT 2013



Foreword

The CIBSE Low Carbon Energy Assessors (LCEA) accreditation scheme has established itself as a leading provider of Energy Assessors and 1400 CIBSE LCEAs and Low Carbon Consultants continued to provide expert services to the industry in 2012.

In 2013 CIBSE Certification continuously worked to raise the profile of the scheme to reinforce the reputation of LCEAs for high quality, expert services. The perception of the scheme is now one of a highly competent cadre of individuals, able not just to count carbon and supply energy certificates, but to control carbon and help clients to meet both their financial and corporate social responsibility aims by reducing their carbon footprints. In 2013 CIBSE Certification applied to extend their UKAS accreditation for the certification of competence for individuals to encompass Green Deal Advisors and also became an Approved Organisation for new and existing non-domestic building EPCs in Scotland.

For CIBSE, the LCEA Register is an important mechanism for raising competence across the industry and has become a vital component in further advancing CIBSE's growing profile as an organisation dedicated to the reduction of carbon in the UK's building stock, and the formalisation of arrangements in Scotland which has resulted in a Low Carbon Consultant (Design) Scotland strand being added is a demonstrable contribution to this mission.

The Background

The LCEA scheme grew from the activities associated with the development of the Low Carbon Consultants Register. The Low Carbon Consultants register was started in 2006 with the aid of a Carbon Trust grant. Its objective was to produce a cadre of individuals with expertise in carbon management both in the design and operation of buildings. It also offered registration to those with expertise in building simulation. In January 2008 with the approval of CIBSE Certification's application to be an accreditation body for energy assessors, the existing low carbon expertise of this group, and new applicants, were used to create a new register – The Low Carbon Energy Assessors.

Using CIBSE Certification individuals can be certified competent and where appropriate registered under the following categories:

- LCC Design
- LCC Design (Scotland)
- LCC Operation
- LCC Simulation
- LCC Energy Management Systems (from February 2010)
- LCEA EPC (non-domestic only)
- LCEA DEC
- Air Conditioning Inspector
- Green Deal Advisor

Additionally, CIBSE Certification can certify organisations as Green Deal Assessor Organisations.

Review of 2013

CIBSE Certification continued to improve its services in 2013, with further refinements to its APEL on-line application system originally introduced at the end of September 2009, making the APEL process quicker and more efficient. 2013 also saw the introduction of a lodgement portal for the lodgement of EPCs in Scotland.

CIBSE Certification has played an active role in the DCLG convention groups and Cross Scheme Moderation meetings resulting in some helpful refinements to the Scheme Operating Requirements.

The CIBSE Low Carbon Energy Assessors continue to produce more than 20% of DEC's being lodged.

Membership

The majority of LCEAs were previously LCCs and most are CIBSE members. CIBSE Certification certifies individuals under the Approval of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) route where experience as well as knowledge and understanding is assessed, typically including design and specification of energy using systems in buildings. They generally have the background and experience which would make it unnecessary to take a further vocational qualification in energy assessment to produce Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) or Display Energy Certificates (DECs). The legislation requiring lodgement of air conditioning reports on a national database was implemented in 2012, and a full operational year in 2013 has confirmed that compliance levels are very low. Members actively involved in specifying, installing or designing air conditioning systems have made up a significant part of applications for certification as air conditioning assessors for complex systems.

Low Carbon Energy Assessors are frequently certified for more than one type of activity.

Lodgements

Lodgement evidence suggests that most CIBSE Low Carbon Energy Assessors do not expect to carry out energy assessments full time, but rather offer assessments as part of a portfolio of services, or in order to complete other work already being undertaken.

A report on lodgements and assessor numbers is contained in the confidential annex to this report.

Those who apply for certification through CIBSE Certification Ltd take the following route:

1. Supply a CV and personal statement for pre-screening (Pre-APEL) using the online system
2. If successful at pre-screening, the applicant will:
 - 2.1. Complete the online APEL.
 - 2.2. Arrange any top-up training necessary to help them prepare to demonstrate their knowledge of the regulations and aspects of the NOS and with CIBSE's Low Carbon requirements, (pass an exam).
 - 2.3. Arrange training in the use of their chosen software if required.
 - 2.4. Submit certificates from training.
 - 2.5. Submit test DEC or test EPCs.
 - 2.6. Online APEL forms are then reviewed by an independent APEL assessor to determine compliance with APEL requirements.
 - 2.7. Test DEC or EPC certificates reviewed by an independent assessor to determine acceptability.
3. If all elements are to the required standard, the applicant will be certified.

For the air conditioning stream applicants take the following route:

1. Candidate supplies a CV and personal statement for pre-screening using the online Pre-APEL system
2. If successful at pre-screening, the applicant will:
 - 2.1. Complete the online APEL.
 - 2.2. Arrange top-up training if necessary.
 - 2.3. Online APEL forms reviewed by an independent APEL assessor.
3. If all aspects are satisfactory the applicant is provisionally approved.
4. The applicant submits three example air conditioning reports which will be scrutinised and if they are deemed satisfactory, certified status will be accorded to the applicant.

Great care is taken to ensure that only those with genuine competence and experience in the industry are admitted to the CIBSE Certification scheme. CIBSE Low Carbon Energy Assessors are recognised by clients as offering a high degree of experience and competence in providing solutions which will work in practice. Therefore each application is thoroughly reviewed by independent APEL assessors drawn from the CIBSE membership, mainly at 'Fellow' level, who are familiar with the requirements for, and are often assessors for Engineering Council registration, as well as being thoroughly conversant with the APEL regime and the National Occupational Standard.

Applicants for EPC and DEC assessors holding a relevant vocational qualification can be registered with CIBSE Certification, subject to satisfying the requirements to join the appropriate LCC register as well.

Quality Assurance – Audit Procedure and Methodology

CIBSE Certification provides a QA system that aims to assure clients that they will receive a service which is compliant with the Scheme Operating Requirement set by DCLG, and one which additionally is truly first class in terms of engineering competence and thus will help clients achieve real reductions in their energy costs. In line with the requirements of the latest Scheme Operating Requirements (SORs) from DCLG, the CIBSE QA scheme is now mainly a desktop process which includes the production of shadow certificates to DCLG criteria in order to provide a 'truth' comparator against which the certificate is judged. The exception to this is the Level 5 strand where assessors are visited at their place of work to review the QA case.

Each month, a sample of LCEAs is identified for auditing. In line with the requirements set out by DCLG, a minimum of two per cent of certificates lodged are audited, and each active assessor will be audited at least once in each six month period.

The objective of the Quality Assurance system is to provide a fair, consistent and robust audit procedure and methodology. Documents describing the audit procedure and methodology have been entered and recorded into CIBSE Certification management and document systems setting down the audit methodology, audit procedures, and the DCLG requirements. The documents used by Low Carbon Energy Assessors are available via the CIBSE Energy Centre website.

Internally, the CASA system performs electronic analysis providing additional support to the quality assurance process. The system provides LCEAs with a free support resource; preliminary QA testing checking the consistency of data input (assessor and building details) revealing any errors before a lodgement is attempted.

Externally, the audit process is broken down into the key aspects of management systems and energy certificate production. A set of pre-audit documents informing the LCEAs of requirements is issued in advance of any audit. This set of documents consists of an audit itinerary, an LCEA questionnaire and checklist and feedback questionnaire to facilitate improvements to the service offered.

Codes of practice: EAs are reminded of the importance of maintaining the standards of their profession including the CIBSE LCEA and the Engineering Council Codes of Conduct and Practice. The CIBSE LCEA code of Conduct was revised in 2012 to align it with the DCLG SORs and is issued to all LCEAs. They should make all in-house teams aware of the Code of Practice and have copies readily available. The Code of Conduct should also be communicated to any third parties commissioned by the LCEA to contribute to the production of energy certificates.

Ethics: LCEAs are also alerted to the need for the production of energy certificates in a truthful, honest and accurate fashion. It is recognised that LCEAs will sometimes be under pressure from clients to adopt a particular approach to their assessment and they are encouraged to use the Engineering Council Code of Practice and the LCEA Code of Conduct, both of which are available on the CIBSE Energy Centre website and can be used by LCEAs to present to clients in order to endorse their personal ethics.

Having the knowledge that the LCEA has been through a thorough and rigorous assessment process from CIBSE Certification gives confidence that they are getting a competent and professional service. The Certification of individuals for the LCC register and for EPC and DEC production is also accredited by UKAS to BS EN ISO 17024 Certification of Persons. This has now been extended to the certification of Green Deal Advisors.

CIBSE Certification Support - Email Management System (EMS):

Customer response – E-mail enquiries / software applications

CIBSE Certification’s email management system adds efficiency to the way it manages and responds to emails from assessors. All incoming messages are received by a central email server where they are assigned and routed to the appropriate person or department using rules and conditions that reflect the workflow and processes. By this means CIBSE Certification aims to:

- improve response time;
- improve response quality by the use of templates, pre-set answers and seamless access to articles in our FAQ/knowledgebase which will also ensure that responses are accurate and consistent; and
- use tracking tools to prevent messages from getting lost (and keep customers from getting frustrated while waiting for replies).

Designed and encoded for busy customer service organisations, CIBSE Certification’s EMS routes, tracks and delivers customer correspondence quickly and efficiently.

Customer Communication Performance

Description	2013	
Support Requests	EPC Inbox: 2727 CASA Support: 82 Case cancellation: 19 Software Support for LCEAs: 44 Technical Helpdesk: 322 Total: 3194	Total software use and installation/CASA/FAQ’s 3194 Note: Following a server attack in June, this set of data is for the post recovery system now in use and is the set of data for the second half of the year.
	25 hours	Average Response Time

Finance

The financial report can be found within the confidential annex.

In its sixth year of operation the scheme continues to generate a surplus. However, there is some uncertainty about future performance and this relates to three major areas:

- the unpredictable economic environment which may reduce absolute numbers of EPCs required
- continuing low levels of compliance with the regulations
- following delays in implementation, enthusiasm for the Green Deal is uncertain

In addition, competition to provide lowest cost building energy certificates has resulted in customer expectations of low cost and low value. which is inconsistent with the quality approach of CIBSE Certification certified LCEAs.

The relatively low level of compliance, particularly in respect of commercial EPCs and air conditioning reports, has become a matter of concern. It affected the ability of the Energy Performance in Buildings Regulations to contribute to the UK achieving its carbon targets. In 2013 CIBSE Certification has worked closely with a cross-industry group, the Property and Energy Professional Association to raise awareness of non-compliance issues with all relevant stakeholders.

CIBSE Certification views the LCEA as important in raising competence across the industry and for providing a much needed cadre of competent persons who can play an active role in reducing the carbon emissions of the UK. Therefore it is committed to continue to invest in the LCEA scheme, and extend its scope of activity into the Green Deal arena.

Looking forward

CIBSE Certification will continue to work to maintain the position of the scheme, continuing to raise the profile of CIBSE LCEAs and to fully service the needs of existing LCEAs with ongoing support and development opportunities. A major commitment has been made to develop further the 'Non compliance costs' campaign to raise awareness of the value of energy assessment and taking action to minimise energy use.

These activities will be more important than ever as it now looks likely that the property market will remain depressed for the next year or so. As cost is likely to be a major factor for clients within this period and will impact heavily on their procurement decisions, it is anticipated that there will be an increase in the demand for lowest possible cost DEC's and EPC's meaning that CIBSE LCEAs must provide proven added value wherever possible. It is clear that Low Carbon Energy Assessors and Low Carbon Consultants are ready and able to make a major impact on the carbon emissions of buildings and are highly committed to doing so.

CIBSE Certification in 2013

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