

**Nationwide House Energy Rating
Scheme®**

**Protocol for Assessor
Accrediting Organisations
- Version 2.1**

September 2022

Disclaimer

This publication provides information on the requirements for being a Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) Assessor Accrediting Organisation and is provided on the understanding that the NatHERS Administrator, the State and Territory Governments and the Commonwealth (the Participating Bodies) are not providing professional advice.

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Acknowledgement of Country

The NatHERS Administrator and The Department acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to their elders both past and present.

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Foreword

The Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) is an initiative administered under the work program of the Energy Ministers. In November 2021 the Energy Technology Working Group (ETWG) and its NatHERS sub-group were established. The ETWG and its NatHERS sub-group consist of representatives from the Commonwealth, state and territory governments. The ETWG's NatHERS sub-group acts as the NatHERS Steering Committee, providing oversight of NatHERS. The Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water is the NatHERS Administrator.

NatHERS was initiated to provide a standardised approach to rating the thermal performance of houses throughout Australia. NatHERS-accredited software has been developed to calculate the theoretical annual energy load on a house. It does this by modelling the effects of heat flow through the building fabric, taking into account factors such as the building's location, orientation, glazing, construction details and the impact of air movement on internal comfort conditions. In 2022 NatHERS was expanded to assess and rate the energy performance of the whole home, this Whole of Home assessment includes fixed appliances and on-site energy generation and storage. The software attributes ratings to the house based on the estimated total annual energy load required to run the home (including both fixed appliances and estimated plug loads) and the climate zone where the house is located.

NatHERS-accredited software may be used to comply with certain building regulations, including the thermal performance provisions for residential buildings in the National Construction Code (NCC).

The success of NatHERS is contingent upon accurate, consistent and repeatable ratings being achieved through the correct use of NatHERS software. Given the level of complexity of NatHERS software, it is important that those who use the software to assess the energy performance of buildings are adequately trained in its use and have a minimum level of understanding of building construction, building thermal performance, appliance performance and the applicable building regulations. Assessors also need to work within a quality assurance framework that encourages and maintains a high standard of ratings.

This Protocol for Assessor Accrediting Organisations (AAOs) has been developed to provide a national framework for the approval and operation of organisations that accredit users of NatHERS software for regulatory purposes. The Protocol enables there to be a number of AAOs operating across state and territory jurisdictions.

Table of Contents

FOREWORD	3
1 SCOPE	5
2 DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS	5
3 ASSESSOR ACCREDITATION	6
3.1 ASSESSOR QUALIFICATION	6
3.2 REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION OF ASSESSORS	7
3.3 NOTICE OF ACCREDITATION	8
3.4 ACCREDITATION IN MORE THAN ONE TOOL	8
4 QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR ASSESSOR SERVICES	8
4.1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS	8
4.2 NATHERS TECHNICAL NOTE	9
4.3 ASSESSOR CODE OF PRACTICE	9
4.4 ASSESSOR SUPPORT	9
4.5 CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)	10
4.6 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES FOR ASSESSMENTS	11
4.7 QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA) REVIEW OF ASSESSORS	11
4.8 REQUIREMENTS FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEWERS	12
4.9 REMEDIAL ACTION	12
4.10 DISCIPLINARY ACTION	13
4.11 PROCESS FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS	13
5 PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY AAOS	14
6 COMMUNICATION TO ASSESSORS	14
7 ANNUAL REPORTS	14
7.1 SUBMISSION OF ANNUAL REPORTS	14
7.2 CONTENT OF ANNUAL REPORTS	15
8 REVIEW OF ASSESSOR ACCREDITING ORGANISATIONS	16
8.1 INVESTIGATION OF AAO PRACTICES	16
8.2 REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION AND CONFIDENTIALITY	17
8.3 AAO INFORMATION HANDLING POLICY	17
8.4 COMPLIANCE	17
8.5 WITHDRAWAL OF AAO STATUS	17
9 EXTENSION OF ACCREDITATION	18
10 APPLICATION TO BECOME AN ASSESSOR ACCREDITING ORGANISATION	18
11 PROVISIONAL ACCREDITATION	19
12 CONFLICT OF INTEREST	19
13 AMENDMENTS OF THIS PROTOCOL	20
APPENDIX A – ASSESSOR CODE OF PRACTICE	21
APPENDIX B – CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY	23
APPENDIX C – TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION IN ADDITIONAL SOFTWARE TOOLS	24
APPENDIX D – NATHERS WHOLE OF HOME ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS	27

1 Scope

- (1) This Protocol describes the processes that are required to be implemented by AAOs that are approved by the NatHERS Administrator to accredit NatHERS Assessors.

2 Definitions and interpretations

- (1) Where used within this Protocol:

AAO means an Assessor Accrediting Organisation, which is an organisation that accredits Assessors in accordance with this Protocol. AAOs have responsibility and accountability for implementing the policies and procedures as set by the NatHERS Administrator. AAOs also have responsibility to support high quality NatHERS outcomes, including relevant information sharing with the NatHERS Administrator and other AAOs.

AA Code of Practice means an Accredited Assessor Code of Conduct.

ABCB means the Australian Building Codes Board.

Applicant means a person who applies to an AAO for accreditation as an Assessor.

Applicant Organisation means an organisation which applies to the NatHERS Administrator to become an AAO.

Assessment means an energy performance simulation performed using a NatHERS Software Tool conducted by an Assessor for regulatory purposes. (See Thermal Assessment and Whole of Home Assessment).

Assessor means a person accredited by an AAO to use NatHERS Software to estimate the energy performance of buildings for regulatory purposes. Assessors may be accredited for all Assessments or Thermal Assessments only.

Benchmark Assessment means an assessment that is completed by an Assessor, using one or more standardised plans provided by the AAO or NatHERS Administrator, where the rating result has already been calculated. This is used to check the accuracy of the Assessor's rating and competency in software tool operation.

Commonwealth means the Australian Government.

Conflict of Interest means a circumstance described in Item 1 of Appendix B (Conflict of Interest Policy).

CPD means Continuing Professional Development, which provides a mechanism for Assessors to maintain and improve skills and knowledge.

Disciplinary Action means action undertaken by an AAO in response to underperforming or otherwise unsatisfactory behaviour of an Assessor.

Jurisdiction means the relevant state or territory government department or regulatory authority.

NatHERS means the Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme.

NatHERS Accredited Certificates means a full colour NatHERS Certificate which specifies an assessor is accredited. Example certificates are available at www.nathers.gov.au.

NatHERS Administrator means the Commonwealth officials responsible for administering NatHERS on behalf of all governments.

NatHERS Certificate means an official certificate using templates approved by the NatHERS Administrator and generated by the NatHERS Software tools in regulation mode detailing data from the Assessment.

NatHERS Software means a calculation software tool in regulation mode that is accredited by the NatHERS Administrator as complying with the current version of the NatHERS Software Accreditation Protocol or software that is otherwise recognised by the NatHERS Steering Committee.

NCC means the relevant version of the National Construction Code.

Quality Assurance or **QA** means the Quality Assurance system for checking whether Assessments have been performed correctly in accordance with the NatHERS Technical Note and any other requirements placed on Assessors by this Protocol.

Regulatory Mode means the operation of NatHERS Software using a specific set of defined inputs and parameters for the purposes of completing an Assessment for achieving compliance with a particular Jurisdiction's application of the NCC.

Remedial Action means a process undertaken by an AAO to support improved rating outcomes from accredited Assessors found to have produced inaccurate Assessments following a Quality Assurance review.

RTO means Registered Training Organisation as defined by the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Steering Committee means the body that oversees the development and administration of NatHERS, currently the NatHERS sub-group of the Energy Technology Working Group (ETWG). The Steering Committee has currently established and delegated responsibility for scheme administration and responsibilities for implementation of the NatHERS Strategic Plan to the NatHERS Administrator.

Technical Note means the procedures detailed in the NatHERS Technical Note published on www.nathers.gov.au for entering a building's characteristics into NatHERS Software tools in Regulatory Mode.

Thermal Assessment means an assessment undertaken using NatHERS software to generate an energy rating based on the shell of a dwelling and the estimated energy use for heating and cooling.

Whole of Home Assessment means an assessment that builds on a Thermal Assessment to generate an energy rating for the whole home including fixed appliances (heating and cooling appliances, hot water systems, lighting, pool/spa pumps, on-site energy generation) combined with the thermal shell.

Whole of Home Assessor means an Assessor who has been accredited to complete Whole of Home assessments.

3 Assessor Accreditation

3.1 Assessor qualification

- (1) All NatHERS Accredited Assessors must hold a Certificate IV in one of the following qualifications:
 - a) Certificate IV in NatHERS Assessment - CPP41212
 - b) Certificate IV in Home Energy Efficiency and Sustainability (Thermal Performance Assessment) - CPP41119

- c) Certificate IV in Home Energy Efficiency and Sustainability (Home Sustainability Assessment and Thermal Performance Assessment) - CPP41119.
- (2) For assessors to be considered Accredited to undertake Whole of Home assessments for NCC purposes they must have completed training as outlined in **Appendix D** in addition to the above.

3.2 Requirements for accreditation of Assessors

- (1) A person (Applicant) may apply to an AAO to be accredited as an Assessor.
- (2) An AAO may accredit an Applicant as an Assessor where the Applicant meets all of the following requirements:
 - a) the Applicant has successfully completed the required qualification in accordance with **section 3.1**;
 - b) the Applicant provides a certified copy of the Certificate and Record of Results of a qualification in accordance with **section 3.1** to the AAO as proof of completion;
 - c) the Applicant has notified the AAO of any current or previous accreditation with another AAO;
 - d) the Applicant has nominated to the AAO the software tools they will use, and the AAO has confirmed this to the Applicant;
 - e) the Applicant provides a certified copy of the Certificate of completion of software training to the AAO as proof;
 - f) the Applicant agrees they will comply with the AAO's Assessor Code of Practice;
 - g) the Applicant agrees to conduct Assessments in accordance with the NatHERS Technical Note unless these contradict the laws of the jurisdiction in which the assessment is being conducted; State or Territory regulatory requirements prevail in the event of contradictions;
 - h) the Applicant agrees that, when using NatHERS Software to demonstrate compliance with a jurisdiction's application of the NCC, they will create and use NatHERS Accredited Certificates;
 - i) the Applicant agrees to only use the trademarked NatHERS name and logo in sole conjunction with a NatHERS Certificate. No other part of the NatHERS tools output, such as summary diagnostic reports, will be used to demonstrate NCC compliance;
 - Note: assessors can provide other supporting reports that accompany an official NatHERS Certificate. Any supporting reports that accompany an official NatHERS Certificate must include the NatHERS stamp, in accordance with clause 13 of the NatHERS technical note.
 - j) the Applicant agrees they will submit a minimum of 3 NatHERS Assessments per year in at least one of the Software Tools they are accredited in. It is the responsibility of the AAO to disable an Assessor's certificate portal access where there have been no NatHERS Certificates produced for 3 years. After that time, the Assessor must go through reaccreditation of that software to reinstate use; and
 - Note: where an assessor is unable to submit 3 NatHERS assessments, the AAO may permit the assessor to undertake a Benchmarking exercise.
 - k) the Applicant agrees they will conduct their Assessments in a way which ensures the health and safety of themselves, and others, so far as reasonably practicable

and which complies with all relevant workplace health and safety laws in the Jurisdictions in which they operate.

- (3) Where an Applicant applies to have their accreditation as an Assessor reinstated following cancellation by an AAO as a Disciplinary Action, or voluntarily withdrawal of their accreditation prior to Disciplinary Action taking effect, the AAO must seek agreement from the NatHERS Administrator. The Applicant must provide evidence to satisfy the AAO that they:
 - a) have undergone appropriate activities as directed by the AAO to improve their ratings accuracy or otherwise address their unsatisfactory behaviour; and
 - b) will comply with the requirements of the AAO's Code of Practice; and
 - c) agree to be subject to a Quality Assurance (QA) review within their first 12 months of re-accreditation; and
 - d) agree to undertake a benchmark assessment prior to being granted accreditation as administered by the AAO.
- (4) Where an Applicant applies to be accredited with another AAO, the potential new AAO must write to the previous AAO and request full details of any outstanding requirements to be met before deciding whether to take over accreditation of the assessor.
- (5) An AAO may refuse to take on accreditation of an assessor where they have reasonable grounds to do so.

3.3 Notice of accreditation

- 1) Upon satisfying the accreditation criteria in **section 3.2** of this Protocol, the AAO must:
 - a) notify the Assessor in writing of their accreditation;
 - b) provide the Assessor with a unique accreditation number; and
 - c) provide an electronic copy of their Code of Practice and the NatHERS Technical Note to the Assessor.
- (2) An Assessor may only be accredited with one AAO at any given time.
- (3) When an Assessor is newly accredited, the AAO must notify the other AAOs within 7 business days of accreditation.

3.4 Accreditation in more than one tool

- 1) Assessors may only be accredited in more than one tool if they have completed:
 - a) one of the Certificate IV qualifications listed in **section 3.1**, which includes the completion of a training course in at least one Software Tool; and
 - a) a training course for the additional Software Tool that meets all of the requirements specified in **Appendix C**.

4 Quality Assurance system for Assessor services

4.1 General requirements

- (1) An AAO must have a QA system in place that has been approved by the NatHERS Administrator to ensure Assessors conduct Assessments in an accurate, consistent and repeatable manner.

- (2) The QA system must include, as a minimum, the establishment and implementation of:
 - a) an Assessor Code of Practice;
 - b) ongoing technical support to Assessors;
 - c) management, tracking and coordination of CPD activities;
 - d) an Assessment monitoring, review and remedial program, including mechanisms to check that Assessors are using the relevant version of the Technical Note and a version of the NatHERS Software tool accredited at the time the Assessment was commenced and for which the assessor is accredited to use;
 - e) policies for managing complaints about Assessors; and
 - f) a Disciplinary Action policy.
- (3) Where agreed by the NatHERS Administrator, activities performed by an Assessor to comply with an AAO's QA system may be eligible for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points.
- (4) Proposals for changes to any element of an AAO's QA system must be lodged with the NatHERS Administrator for approval before implementation, and the NatHERS Administrator will respond to the AAO within 10 business days.

4.2 NatHERS Technical Note

- (1) The NatHERS Administrator will provide to AAOs:
 - a) draft of any new or amended NatHERS Technical Note for comment; with reasonable notice, of at least 3 months or as negotiated with the AAOs, of any changes to, or the introduction of, a Technical Note; excepting where
 - a. a state or territory government, or the Australian Building Codes Board request changes to a Technical Note and require specific transitional arrangements; and
 - b. a final version of a NatHERS Technical Note with the stated transitional arrangements.
- (2) AAOs will be required within 3 months, or other period set in consultation with the NatHERS Administrator, to:
 - a) implement any new or amended Technical Notes across their QA systems; and
 - b) advise their Assessors of the changes to the Technical Note.

4.3 Assessor Code of Practice

- (1) AAOs are required to establish and implement an Assessor Code of Practice which, as a minimum, covers the requirements as may be referred to in the text of this Protocol and in **Appendix A**.
- (2) AAOs may include additional requirements in their Code of Practice, provided they are consistent with the intent of this Protocol.
- (3) AAOs must ensure Assessors adhere to the AAO's Code of Practice to maintain the Assessor's accreditation.

4.4 Assessor support

- (1) AAOs must ensure the Assessors they accredit are provided with ongoing support, including advice in relation to accuracy, consistency and repeatability of Assessments

and advice on changing requirements due to Technical Note updates and relevant building regulations, including any state or territory-specific requirements.

- (2) In instances of finding conflicting advice, AAOs or Assessors should immediately inform the NatHERS Administrator.
- (3) AAO support does not extend to advice on the operation of NatHERS Software which is expected to be provided by the software developers and/or distributors. AAOs or Assessors should refer any Software/IT questions directly to the software provider.
- (4) Where an assessor has failed benchmark exams, the AAO may refer them to the software training provider for further training.
- (5) Assessors must be able to access support services from their AAO via no less than email and telephone. Upon receipt of a request for support from an Assessor, an AAO must provide a response within 2 business days (days on which the AAO is open for business).

4.5 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

- (1) AAOs must provide CPD activities for Assessors they have accredited, including via:
 - a) the distribution of regular electronic newsletters at appropriate intervals; and
 - b) coordination of a professional development program. For example this may include workshops and seminars on topics of interest, advanced training in specific areas of relevance to Assessors and/or Benchmark Assessments.
- (2) AAOs must make available to Assessors they have accredited, a mechanism for recording their attendance at all CPD activities, for validation by the AAO.
- (3) AAOs must ensure their Assessors complete at least 12 CPD points in each year of accreditation, and one point will equal at least one hour of time spent undertaking the CPD. An AAO may suspend an assessor's accreditation until such time as they have achieved the 12 CPD points.
- (4) 3 CPD points may be allowed to be rolled over in any one year.
- (5) At least six of the CPD points must be completed in technical training. Technical training includes:
 - a) Training in the understanding of the NatHERS Technical Note and the NatHERS Assessor Handbook.
 - b) Training in the use of NatHERS accredited software tools, including formal training from AAO approved mentors.
 - c) Training in the use of other residential energy efficiency software or assessment mechanism (for example blower door testing).
 - d) Training in ways to improve building envelope thermal potential and/or performance.
 - e) Training in the NCC energy efficiency provisions and other regulatory instruments relevant to NatHERS.
 - f) Training regarding the efficiency of fixed appliances and impact of on-site energy generation and storage.

- (6) AAOs must implement mechanisms for assessing the learning outcomes of the CPD activities they provide, where feasible.
- (7) Where an Accredited Assessor has failed to meet CPD obligations with an AAO by their accreditation renewal date and has either had their accreditation suspended, terminated, or they have elected to cancel their accreditation; the assessor must upon application with the existing or alternate AAO, complete the prior CPD requirements before they can become reaccredited. AAOs are required to share information between AAOs of those Assessors who have outstanding CPD requirements at time of accreditation termination or cancellation.
- (8) Where an Accredited Assessor has been out of the industry for more than 12 months, they are required to pass a benchmarking exercise and undertake training in any areas required.

4.6 Quality Assurance processes for Assessments

- (1) An AAO must have a quality assurance system in place for ensuring Assessors conduct assessments in a satisfactory and repeatable manner.
- (2) AAOs must undertake QA processes for Assessments produced by their Assessors to ensure, as far as possible, that:
 - a) Assessments are accurate, consistent and repeatable;
 - b) Assessors are correctly applying the relevant building regulations, including any state or territory-specific requirements;
 - c) Assessors are complying with the AAO's Assessor Code of Practice;
 - d) Assessors are conducting Assessments in line with the relevant version of the NatHERS Technical Note and using NatHERS Software accredited at the time the Assessment was commenced; and
 - e) Appropriate and timely Remedial Action is taken to improve the performance of Assessors whose Assessments are found to contain errors.
- (3) AAOs must provide ongoing technical support and professional development opportunities to maintain competencies.
- (4) The AAO QA procedures must be lodged with the NatHERS Administrator as part of the application to become an AAO, and maintained for currency.
- (5) The NatHERS Administrator may compel the AAO to withdraw accreditation of an assessor or take other remedial or disciplinary action in response to a non-compliance with this Protocol, Technical Note or the AAO Code of Practice.

4.7 Quality Assurance (QA) Review of Assessors

- (1) Each year, AAOs will undertake a QA review of at least 20% of all Assessors it accredits under a process to be agreed with the NatHERS Administrator.
- (2) AAOs will implement a process whereby Assessors are selected by AAOs to participate in the QA review process, based on a risk Assessment process agreed by the NatHERS Administrator.
- (3) QA reviews should also test the application of knowledge. In undertaking a QA review of the application of knowledge, the reviewer should:

- a. review at least one Assessment completed by the Assessor in the last 12 months;
 - b. investigate for any errors identified;
 - c. investigate the software file and NatHERS Certificate, dwelling specifications, or some drawing documentation as applicable to the approved QA strategy (this could include a floorplan) to identify any errors; and
 - d. score the accuracy of the Assessor's software inputs and processes.
- (4) The AAO will provide feedback in a timely manner to the Assessor regarding any errors and the correct method.
 - (5) Where the Assessor receives a score of less than 80% from the QA review process, the Assessor will be subjected to Remedial Action under **section 4.10**.
 - (6) Where the AAO considers the findings from the QA review process warrants such action, the AAO may pursue Disciplinary Action under **section 4.11** without first undertaking Remedial Action.
 - (7) The AAO must notify the Assessor that, where an Assessor has concerns with the outcome of the QA Review, they must present this in writing to the AAO within 10 business days of being notified of the QA review outcome. Following consideration of the Assessor's concerns, the AAO's decision will be final.

4.8 Requirements for Quality Assurance reviewers

- (1) QA reviews are to be carried out by Assessors with a high degree of competency and experience in the NatHERS Software used by the Assessors that they are reviewing.
- (2) AAOs must undertake an annual benchmarking exercise, whereby measures are undertaken to ensure consistent rating practices and assumptions between QA reviewers.
- (3) QA reviewers must have:
 - a. had no remedial or Disciplinary Action taken against them in the last 3 years; and
 - b. collectively, across all QA reviewers, the ability to undertake QA reviews in all recently accredited versions of each software tool.
- (4) A QA reviewer must report to the AAO, all potential real or perceived conflicts of interest with the Assessors that they are reviewing.
- (5) The AAO must implement processes to manage any potential real or perceived conflict of interest between QA reviewers and the Assessors they review.

4.9 Remedial Action

- (1) The objective of Remedial Action is to support improved rating outcomes from underperforming Assessors.
- (2) AAOs must have policies and procedures, approved by the NatHERS Administrator, for taking Remedial Action to ensure underperforming Assessors meet the required standards.
- (3) Remedial Action may include, but is not limited to, examinations, use of Benchmark Assessments, targeted CPD, mentoring, refresher training and/or retraining.

- (4) In the event that Remedial Action does not improve the quality of an underperforming Assessor's Assessments in a timely manner, an AAO will initiate Disciplinary Action to suspend the Assessor's accreditation until they are satisfied that sufficient improvement has been demonstrated.
- (5) The AAOs policies and procedures must include an appeals process for Assessors that are required to undertake remedial or Disciplinary Action.
- (6) Where an Assessor withdraws their accreditation to avoid Remedial Action, this will be deemed a cancellation of accreditation by the AAO. The AAO's policies and procedures must include an appeals process which allows an opportunity for Assessors to appeal a decision.

4.10 Disciplinary Action

- (1) AAOs must have policies and procedures, approved by the NatHERS Administrator, for taking Disciplinary Action against underperforming Assessors or Assessors whose behaviour is otherwise unsatisfactory.
- (2) Pending an investigation of the Assessor's actions, an AAO will suspend the accreditation of any Assessor who it deems has:
 - a. refused to participate or cooperate in a QA review or Remedial Action;
 - b. failed its QA review and subsequent Remedial Action;
 - c. produced Assessments that do not comply with the NatHERS or AAO's branding, guidelines, technical notes or AAO's Assessor Code of Practice; or
 - d. failed to comply with the requirements of their AAO's Assessor Code of Practice.
- (3) When an Assessor's accreditation is cancelled or when an Assessor withdraws their accreditation to avoid Disciplinary Action, the responsible AAO will notify the NatHERS Administrator, relevant software provider and other AAOs within 5 business days and remove the Assessor from the AAOs list of accredited Assessors.
- (4) Where an Assessor withdraws their accreditation to avoid Disciplinary Action, this will be deemed a cancellation of accreditation by the AAO. The AAO's policies and procedures must include an appeals process which allows an opportunity for Assessors to appeal a decision prior to suspending or cancelling their accreditation.
- (5) In cases when an Assessor fails Remedial and Disciplinary action, the AAO must inform other AAOs, relevant software provider and relevant jurisdiction authorities.
- (6) In cases where an Assessor fails Disciplinary action, the AAO may cancel the accreditation of that Assessor.

4.11 Process for dealing with complaints

- (1) AAOs must establish a system policies and procedures for responding to complaints about Assessors from other Assessors, clients, businesses, Jurisdictions or members of the public. This includes a process for:
 - a. logging complaints and actions taken to resolve them; and
 - b. managing responses to complaints in a timely manner.
- (2) AAOs must notify the NatHERS Administrator within 5 business days of any complaints that relate to issues that impact on Scheme integrity. For example, an AAO

may become aware of systemic deficiencies, or a concentration of complaints associated with particular Assessors that may not be random.

5 Public statements by AAOs

- (1) AAOs may make statements to their members or to the public regarding government decisions in relation to NatHERS policies or operations.
- (2) AAOs must present factual statements in relation to NatHERS policies or procedures to the NatHERS Administrator prior to publication for checking to ensure accuracy. AAOs must provide the NatHERS Administrator a minimum of 2 business days unless otherwise agreed by both parties, to provide comments before a statement is released publicly.
- (3) The NatHERS Administrator will present factual statements in relation to an AAO's policies or procedures to the relevant AAO prior to publication for checking to ensure accuracy. The NatHERS Administrator will provide the AAO a minimum of 2 business days to provide comments before a statement is released publicly.
- (4) Statements by the NatHERS Administrator or AAOs containing opinions on AAO or NatHERS policies or procedures should indicate this clearly in the statement and be provided to the relevant party prior to publication for its information only.

6 Communication to Assessors

- (1) Communications between an AAO and an Assessor, or an AAO and the NatHERS Administrator, may be sent in electronic form by email.
- (2) The NatHERS Administrator will advise AAOs of notices to be forwarded to Assessors in relation to:
 - a. new, or changes to, NatHERS policies and operations;
 - b. significant changes to the NatHERS Software;
 - c. upcoming events being organised by the NatHERS Administrator; or
 - d. changes to jurisdictional application of NatHERS ratings in building regulations.
- (3) The AAOs undertake to forward any notices within 2 business days or as agreed with the NatHERS Administrator.

7 Annual reports

7.1 Submission of annual reports

- (1) AAOs must submit an annual report for the previous financial year (or from date of accreditation if accredited during that year) to the NatHERS Administrator by 31 October each year.
- (2) Newly accredited AAOs may have the timing of their first annual report adjusted at the discretion of the NatHERS Administrator.
- (3) The NatHERS Administrator will make available all annual reports to Jurisdictions for their information and comment.

- (4) The NatHERS Administrator will provide feedback to the AAOs on the quality of their annual reports, or on any issues raised by the AAOs in the reports regarding the implementation of the AAO Protocol, within 3 months of receipt of the report.
- (5) The NatHERS Administrator will submit a Conflict of Interest Declaration form to the AAOs, which must be completed as part of the annual report accreditation process.

7.2 Content of annual reports

- (1) As a minimum, annual reports submitted by an AAO must include each of the following:
 - a. A statement of compliance with this Protocol, signed by a person with authority to act on behalf of the AAO.
- (2) Organisation details, including:
 - a. an overview of structure and operations including staff and/or Board membership;
 - b. notice of any changes to organisational processes required by this Protocol; and
 - c. a financial statement for the previous financial year audited according to the relevant Australian Accounting Standards.
- (3) Quality Assurance details, including:
 - a. a summary of the QA review system used by the AAO and how this meets requirements; as per **sections 4.6** and **4.7**;
 - b. details of the outcomes of the reviews undertaken by the AAO under **sections 4.7** and **4.8**;
 - c. the names, qualifications and experience of the AAO's Quality Assurance reviewers, and details of the process employed to avoid conflicts of interest with the Assessors they review;
 - d. a summary of errors found and actions taken to improve Assessments and manage risks;
 - e. if desired, recommendations to the NatHERS Administrator for improvements to the accuracy and consistency of NatHERS Assessments;
 - f. a summary of remedial actions (including length and outcomes); and
 - g. a summary of disciplinary actions undertaken by the AAO against Assessors, including the Assessor's name, date and outcomes.
- (4) Continuing Professional Development details, including:
 - a. a statement on the CPD activities managed by the AAO for its Assessors, including the number of attendees, and learning outcomes; and
 - b. at a minimum, provide a summary of Assessors who have not met minimum 12 CPD points and remedial action, for the reporting period.
- (5) A summary of complaints made about Assessors, including the type of complaint, severity and how it was resolved.
- (6) Assessor details, including:

- a. the total number of Assessors accredited, numbers of new and ceasing Assessors, and the overall number of Assessments undertaken by the AAO's Assessors in the reporting year;
 - b. a summary of the Assessor demographics into categories including ratio by Jurisdiction, number of Assessments undertaken per Assessor, and breakdown of tools used by Assessors;
 - c. a list of the names and accreditation numbers of any Assessors who ceased being accredited during the year and the date and reason for the cessation; and
 - d. a list of the Assessors currently accredited by the AAO, including the following details about each Assessor:
 - i. Name
 - ii. Accreditation number
 - iii. Contact details
 - iv. Date of first accreditation
 - v. Which NatHERS Software is used by the Assessor
 - vi. Date that Certificate IV was achieved
 - vii. Date the last QA process was conducted on the Assessor. A summary of complaints made about Assessors, including the type of complaint, severity and how it was resolved.
- (7) The NatHERS Administrator may request the AAO to clarify, or provide additional information on, any aspect of their annual report.

8 Review of Assessor Accrediting Organisations

8.1 Investigation of AAO practices

- (1) The NatHERS Administrator may at any time decide to:
- a) conduct a review of any AAO procedure, policy and/or practice; or
 - b) undertake audits of:
 - i. random Assessments;
 - ii. groups of Assessments done by particular Assessors;
 - iii. the records of the AAO in relation to the accreditation and activities of particular Assessors; or
 - iv. Disciplinary Actions taken by the AAO against particular Assessors.
- (2) Investigations may be undertaken by the NatHERS Administrator itself or a representative of the Administrator.
- (3) AAOs must comply with reasonable requests from the NatHERS Administrator or its representative for information required to undertake its investigations, and for the NatHERS Administrator or its representative to inspect records at the AAO's offices.

- (4) The AAO must cooperate in any Benchmark Assessment studies undertaken by the NatHERS Administrator in relation to its Assessors.

8.2 Requests for Information and confidentiality

- (1) At any time the NatHERS Administrator may reasonably request that AAOs provide:
 - a) evidence to demonstrate that the requirements of this Protocol are being adhered to; and
 - b) information regarding its Assessors or the AAO's activities in implementing this Protocol.

8.3 AAO Information Handling Policy

- (1) AAOs must keep all information (including data and personal information) they collect for or on behalf of the NatHERS Administrator confidential, and adhere to all applicable privacy legislation including:
 - a) taking all steps necessary to safeguard the confidentiality of that information; and
 - b) not using or disclosing that information without the consent of the NatHERS Administrator.

8.4 Compliance

- (1) The NatHERS Administrator reserves the right to take action at any time to ensure that an AAO fully complies with this Protocol. This may include:
 - a) applying conditions on the operations of the AAO; and/or
 - b) suspending or withdrawing the approval of the organisation to be an AAO.

8.5 Withdrawal of AAO status

- (1) The NatHERS Administrator may withdraw its approval of an AAO at any time if any of its policies or operations as required by this Protocol are deemed by the NatHERS Administrator to be unsatisfactory and are not rectified by the AAO within one month of notification by the NatHERS Administrator.
- (2) If the NatHERS Administrator reasonably believes that an AAO's Conflict of Interest cannot be managed appropriately, the NatHERS Administrator may withdraw its approval of an AAO unless the AAO proposes an approach to manage the Conflict of Interest which is acceptable to the NatHERS Administrator (in its absolute discretion) within one month of notification by the NatHERS Administrator.
- (3) The NatHERS Administrator will provide to the AAO a notice period of at least 3 months of the withdrawal of its AAO status.
- (4) In the event the NatHERS Administrator withdraws an organisation's status as an AAO, or the organisation voluntarily withdraws from being an AAO, other approved AAOs must accept as members Assessors that were accredited with the formerly approved AAO.
- (5) Transferred Assessors must provide the accepting AAO with their Certificate of Currency for Professional Indemnity Insurance and pay any membership and accreditation fees as required.

- (6) The accepting AAOs will treat transferring Assessors as existing Assessors for the purposes of the Assessor qualification requirements, and may give credit to the transferring Assessors' current CPD points if acceptable to the AAO.
- (7) In the event of withdrawal of an AAO, further administrative and financial considerations will be agreed across AAOs and the NatHERS Administrator.

9 Extension of Accreditation

- (1) The NatHERS Administrator will review an AAO's performance 6 months before its accreditation expires to determine whether its accreditation will be extended for a further period, and determine whether any conditions should be imposed.
- (2) The NatHERS Administrator may consult with Jurisdictions as necessary on reviews of AAOs.

10 Application to become an Assessor Accrediting Organisation

- (1) An incorporated organisation (Applicant Organisation) may apply to the NatHERS Administrator to become an AAO. Unincorporated organisations may not apply.
- (2) Applications must be submitted to the NatHERS Administrator and include evidence to demonstrate:
 - a) experience in providing member services to the building industry;
 - b) the demonstrated availability of Assessors who will undertake the organisation's QA processes, who have equivalent qualifications to those specified in **section 4.6**;
 - c) how the organisation will address each of the requirements outlined in this Protocol, particularly the QA system which will be applied by the organisation;
 - d) that the organisation's Board, governance and management structure is capable of managing Conflicts of Interest which might impede the proper execution of accreditation activities;
 - e) the organisation's ability to provide accreditation services across the Jurisdictions in which it is proposes to operate;
 - f) the financial viability of the organisation for at least the period of accreditation; and
 - g) the holding of an appropriate ongoing level of professional indemnity and public liability insurance cover.
- (3) The NatHERS Administrator may, in its sole discretion, approve an application by an Applicant Organisation to become an AAO.
- (4) The NatHERS Administrator may request further information from the Applicant Organisation about its application.
- (5) The NatHERS Administrator will consult with Jurisdictions before making a decision with respect to an application.

- (6) Applicant Organisations will be notified of the NatHERS Administrator's decision within three months from the date the application is received, or from when the NatHERS Administrator receives further information requested from the organisation.
- (7) Approval to operate as an AAO will be granted for a specified period of no more than three years, and may include conditions governing the scope of accreditation services that can be provided by that AAO.
- (8) The NatHERS Administrator will notify Jurisdictions, AAOs and relevant industry bodies about the determination of applications. The status of all AAOs will be listed on the NatHERS website.
- (9) AAOs may promote their status to the extent of the approval issued by the NatHERS Administrator.

11 Provisional Accreditation

- (1) Applicant Organisations may only be accredited for an initial 6 month Provisional Accreditation period if they have not been accredited in the 12 months prior to the approval of their application.
- (2) At the conclusion of the Provisional Accreditation period, the NatHERS Administrator will decide if full accreditation will be granted to the Applicant Organisation, based on an abridged-annual report including some or all of the following:
 - (a) the Provisionally Accredited Organisation's performance in establishing policies and procedures for meeting the requirements of this Protocol; and
 - (b) the results of a 6 month QA review by the Provisionally Accredited Organisation; evidence of the Provisionally Accredited Organisation's financial performance for the period of Provisional Accreditation, audited according to the relevant Australian Accounting Standards; and any other information relevant to the Provisionally Accredited Organisation's expected ability to comply with the obligations of an AAO.

12 Conflict of Interest

- (1) The AAO warrants that, to the best of its knowledge after making diligent inquiry, at the date of agreeing to this Protocol no Conflict of Interest exists, or is likely to arise in the performance of its obligations under this Protocol, that has not been disclosed to the NatHERS Administrator in writing.
- (2) The AAO must:
 - (a) comply with the Conflict of Interest Policy set out at **Attachment B** to this Protocol as long as it remains Accredited or Provisionally Accredited. If a Conflict of Interest arises, or appears likely to arise, while the AAO remains accredited, the AAO must immediately notify the NatHERS Administrator; and
 - (b) promptly disclose all relevant information to the NatHERS Administrator in writing, including steps the AAO proposes to take to manage the Conflict of Interest; and promptly take any steps reasonably required by the NatHERS Administrator to manage the Conflict of Interest as required by this Protocol.

13 Amendments of this Protocol

- (1) The NatHERS Administrator may make amendments to this Protocol at any time to ensure its currency and effectiveness. The NatHERS Administrator will consult with AAOs about all planned amendments.
- (2) Final amendments to the Protocol will be agreed by the NatHERS Steering Committee.
- (3) AAOs, the NatHERS Steering Committee, relevant state or territory regulators and relevant industry bodies will be notified of its publication.
- (4) The AAOs will be required within 3 months, or any other period set in consultation with the NatHERS Administrator, to:
 - a) make any necessary adjustments to its policies and operations to ensure compliance with the amended Protocol; and
 - b) advise their Assessors of amendments to this Protocol; and
 - c) advise the NatHERS Administrator of the date when the Protocol will come into force in the AAO policies and operations.

Appendix A – Assessor Code of Practice

- (1) AAOs must include the following requirements in their Assessor Code of Practice and any other relevant requirement not listed below but contained in the text of the NatHERS Protocol for AAOs. AAOs may include additional requirements in their Code of Practice, provided they are consistent with the Protocol for AAOs and lawful. The AAO Assessor Code of Practice/Conduct must be provided to the AAO applicant and signed and dated by the applicant at the time of Accreditation.
- (2) To achieve and maintain their accreditation, Assessors must commit to:
 - a) a high level of diligence and professionalism to ensure their assessments are as accurate as possible;
 - b) operating at all times in compliance with all applicable laws;
 - c) producing Assessments in compliance with relevant building regulations, including any state or territory-specific requirements;
 - d) create and use NatHERS Certificates when using NatHERS Software to demonstrate compliance with a Jurisdiction's application of the NCC;
 - e) not knowingly publishing false or misleading information about their accreditation or the Assessments they have undertaken, their AAO or NatHERS;
 - f) avoiding conflicts of interest with their clients for whom they do Assessments;
 - g) applying the relevant version of the NatHERS Technical Note and using the most recent version of NatHERS Software accredited at the time an Assessment is commenced for regulatory purposes. Where exceptional circumstances prevent the use of the appropriate version of the Software, the reasons must be documented and summarised in "the additional notes" of the NatHERS Certificate;
 - h) when requested by the AAO, providing a copy of all Assessments conducted for regulatory purposes to the AAO to which they are accredited;
 - i) accepting responsibility and liability for each Assessment that has been lodged with the AAO under their name, and not reassigning, delegating or transferring this responsibility to another Assessor;
 - j) maintaining a thorough knowledge of each Assessment and accepting responsibility and liability for each Assessment that has been lodged with the AAO under their name, and not reassigning, delegating or transferring this responsibility to another Assessor;
 - k) using the NatHERS name and logo only in accordance with the NatHERS Guidelines for using the NatHERS logo;
 - l) maintaining professional indemnity insurance commensurate with the volume and scope of the work they undertake with a minimum indemnity value of no less than \$1m;
 - m) cooperate with AAOs, NatHERS Administrator, relevant jurisdictions, regulators and clients by submitting assessments for review, including providing access to all relevant documentation such as assessment data files, plans and specifications upon which the Assessments are based, and respond to questions;

- n) accepting the results of any reviews and diligently undertaking any remedial or Disciplinary Action required by the AAO;
- o) participating in the system for dealing with complaints about Assessors maintained by the AAO and responding promptly, diligently and with courtesy to any complaints;
- p) meeting at least the minimum requirements of the AAO's CPD program;
- q) advising the AAO promptly of any change in their circumstances that may affect their accreditation or application for accreditation;
- r) agreeing to release to the NatHERS Administrator any information in relation to their accreditation held by the AAO;
- s) keeping any information the Assessor collects on behalf of the NatHERS Administrator confidential; and
- t) only producing NatHERS certificates.

Appendix B – Conflict of Interest Policy

(1) What is a Conflict of Interest?

A Conflict of Interest is a situation where an entity (such as an AAO, an RTO, a non-RTO trainer or assessor) has an interest (whether financial or non-financial) or an affiliation which could improperly influence or could be perceived to improperly influence the entity's actions or hinder their ability to act fairly and independently.

There are three kinds of Conflict of Interest – actual, perceived and potential:

- (a) Actual: A direct conflict between an entity's current duties and responsibilities and existing interests.
- (b) Perceived: Where it could appear that an entity's interests could improperly influence the performance of its duties, whether or not this is in fact the case.
- (c) Potential: Where an entity has interests that could conflict with its official duties in the future.

A Conflict of Interest can arise at any time, including situations where no previous Conflict of Interest existed. As new information becomes known or as circumstances change it is important to assess whether any Conflict of Interest has arisen.

(2) Managing Identified Potential Conflicts of Interest:

AAOs must take the following steps to avoid Conflict of Interest scenarios:

- (a) AAOs must not offer accreditation to, or enter any arrangements with students seeking Assessor accreditation until they have completed a relevant Certificate IV CPP41119 qualification as listed in **section 3.1**;
- (b) AAOs must not offer potential members any form of incentive to become a member;
- (c) AAOs must not offer accreditation to any parties currently under investigation by the NatHERS Administrator;
- (d) AAOs must refer students seeking Assessor accreditation to the MY Skills website to access current training providers for the relevant Certificate IV CPP41119 qualification;
- (e) AAOs must ensure that any affiliated RTOs inform students of all potential AAOs that could provide Assessor accreditation and inform students that the accreditation by any AAO would satisfy NatHERS requirements; and
- (f) any other steps reasonably required by the NatHERS Administrator.

(3) Managing Conflicts of Interest Generally

In accordance with the AAO Protocol, if a Conflict of Interest arises, or appears likely to arise, while the AAO remains accredited, the AAO must:

- (a) immediately notify the NatHERS Administrator;
- (b) promptly disclose all relevant information to the NatHERS Administrator in writing, including steps the AAO proposes to manage the Conflict of Interest; and
- (c) promptly take any steps reasonably required by the NatHERS Administrator to manage the Conflict of Interest.

Appendix C – Training requirements for accreditation in additional software tools

General

- 1) Assessors may only be accredited in more than one software tool if they have completed one of the Certificate IV qualifications listed in **section 3.1**, which includes training in at least one NatHERS Accredited Software Tool. They must also have completed a training course for the additional Software Tool that meets all of the requirements of this appendix.
- 2) The training provider can assume that participants will have considerable prior knowledge in performing home energy performance assessments gained from the attainment of a relevant Certificate IV qualification. Therefore, this course need only focus on the technical aspects of using the additional Software Tool.

Minimum course content requirements

- 1) A course designed to meet the requirements of this appendix must, at a minimum, ensure an assessor is competent in the use of the software tool in regard to the following aspects:
 - a) Main features of user interface
 - b) Starting a new project (including importing plans if applicable)
 - c) How Class 2 projects work in terms of single apartments versus whole buildings
 - d) Finalising a project and producing a NatHERS Certificate(s) and stamp(s)
 - e) How to get help, support or assistance using the tool
 - f) Modelling specific objects in either Class 1 or Class 2 dwellings, including:
 - Uninhabited zones (e.g. subfloor spaces and attics)
 - Ceiling Fans
 - Ceiling Penetrations
 - Ceilings & Roofs
 - Wall
 - Floors
 - Windows
 - Doors
 - Horizontal Openings between Levels
 - Skylights & Roof Windows
 - Shading Objects (such as Horizontal, Vertical & External Screen shading schemes)
 - Fixed appliances as relevant to a Whole of Home Assessment
 - On-site energy generation and storage as relevant to a Whole of Home Assessment
 - g) How to model all relevant NatHERS modelling situations such as, but not limited to:
 - Complex geometry (such as split levels & clerestory windows)
 - Setting adjacencies

- Use of custom windows from the NatHERS window library
 - Ceiling floor & wall constructions (including custom creation & reflective air-gaps as applicable)
 - Walls in contact with ground
 - How reflective air gaps are set
 - Wing walls
 - How colour/absorptance is set (as applicable)
 - Double-storey with a double-height void (Class 1)
- h) How to use the 'Whole of Home' modules to assess the impact of:
- Heating and cooling systems
 - Water heating systems
 - Lighting
 - Pool/spa pumps
 - On-site energy generation and storage (e.g. solar panels and batteries)
- 2) To cover the majority of the software tool features, the course must consist of, at a minimum, the following building designs:
- a) a two-storey Class 1 home, with, as a minimum:
- A double height void
 - A skylight
 - A roof window
- b) a Single Occupancy Unit of a Class 2 apartment with the following adjacencies:
- basement carpark zone underneath
 - apartment above
 - apartment / neighbour to a wall
 - adjacent glazed corridor to a wall
 - outside air to a wall.

Trainer requirements

- 1) The training may be delivered online, face-to-face or a combination of both.
- 2) The training must be developed and delivered by an expert in the software tool for which they seek to provide training in. For the purposes of compliance with this Appendix, an expert is defined as someone who meets at least one of the following requirements, as assessed by the NatHERS Administrator:
- a) Was involved in the development of the software tool;
 - b) Was involved in writing the official software tool user manual or help files;
 - c) Has been recently employed by the software tool developer on the software tool helpdesk;
 - d) Delivers or has recently delivered training in the use of the software tool for Registered Training Organisations or Software Tool Developers; or
 - e) Is recognised by the software tool provider as an expert in using their software tool.

- 3) The NatHERS Administrator will manage trainer endorsement. The suitability of the trainer will be judged against the requirements of **section 3(2)** of this appendix and feedback from the AAOs. The NatHERS Administrator will notify AAO's of endorsed trainers and courses, and these will be listed on the NatHERS website.

Minimum assessment requirements

- 1) Assessment within the Training should provide an appropriate mix of questions and answers, and assessment of actual software tool use, to ensure the applicant is competent in the use of the software tool.
- 2) At least 50% of the minimum course content requirement (**section 2** of this appendix) must be assessed via assessment of actual software use.
- 3) To aid the learning experience, applicants may be given feedback on incorrect multiple choice answers in the form of a second chance to get the correct answer. If a second incorrect choice is made on the same question, the correct answer may be revealed, but the applicant must be marked as incorrect for the purposes of tallying the final assessment score.
- 4) The following assessment accuracies apply:
 - a) Question and answer assessment (if used): minimum 80%
 - b) Dwelling features are accurately modelled: 90%
 - c) Modelled star rating: within 0.2 stars of the assessment case study
- 5) Applicants that fail the course may elect to redo the entire course (learning modules and assessments).

Minimum documentation requirements

- (1) At the successful completion of the course, a certificate stating topics covered, date completed, assessor name, certificate number and details of the assessment including software version No. must be provided to the Applicant. Records must be kept so that AAOs can contact the training provider for confirmation of the course completion.

Appendix D – NatHERS Whole of Home accreditation requirements

General

- 1) For Assessors to be considered accredited to undertake Whole of Home assessments they must show evidence that they have completed either:
 - a. The NatHERS Whole of Home Technical Note CPD unit; and
 - b. Training in the tool in which they hold accreditation specific to the Whole of Home Modules.

Or;

 - c. A relevant Certificate IV qualification that has been updated to include NatHERS Whole of Home training (a list will be made available at NatHERS.gov.au when available).