



## ABSA National Accreditation

### Overview of the ABSA National Accreditation Scheme

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All Australian States and Territories require new homes to meet minimum thermal performance standards. The overall regulation requiring Building Thermal Performance Assessment ratings is the [Building Code of Australia \(BCA\)](#), applicable in all states except NSW, where [BASIX](#) is the regulation in force.

These regulations have competency requirements for the practitioners that carry out Building Thermal Performance Assessments. The Building Code of Australia (BCA) requires that Local Building Approval Authorities obtain evidence that all mandatory minimum energy ratings are carried out by *'suitably qualified persons'*. In NSW the BASIX regulation requires *'Thermal Comfort Simulation'* ratings to be carried out by ABSA Accredited Assessors.

To this end, ABSA has developed a National Accreditation Scheme to ensure ABSA Accredited Assessors meet all national BCA as well as BASIX requirements. The [Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme \(NatHERS\)](#) website provides some further background.

Additionally ABSA Accreditation provides a high level of support and services to all its Assessors, to ensure that they can practice in a professional and effective way. This includes a dedicated Assessor Helpline, affordable PI Insurance, and a clear, quality assured method for carrying out ratings and certifying dwellings. ABSA has also carefully designed its' Scheme to ensure that all certified documents issued by its Assessors comply with Certifying Authorities requirements.

This document is designed to introduce the ABSA National Accreditation Scheme, provide an understanding of how it will operate in your State, and outline the steps to take if you decide to apply for ABSA Accreditation.

It is recommended that new candidates should also consult the related ABSA documents:

- [2<sup>nd</sup> Generation software and the National Qualification](#)
- [Becoming an ABSA Accredited Assessor](#)

# ABSA National Accreditation Scheme

## Components of the National Accreditation Scheme

The ABSA Accreditation Scheme is a federally endorsed system for carrying out Building Thermal Performance Assessments, by the use of sophisticated house energy rating software tools to calculate the predicted heating and cooling energy loads of a dwelling. This assessment method is used in all States of Australia to show compliance with building regulatory standards, and can help in assessing future comfort and energy savings.

ABSA Accreditation of Assessors is regulated by a comprehensive Scheme, which includes:

- Training and examination of candidates;
- The application of accurate and consistent standards for the rating and certification of dwellings through a Code of Practice and Assessor rating procedures, including Assessor auditing to ensure suitable Assessor practice and standards,
- The requirement for the holding of current Professional Indemnity insurance,
- Continuing professional development.
- Support for Assessors in conducting Building Thermal Performance Assessments, and the provision of related certification

The ABSA Accreditation Scheme requirements are essential to ensure:

- Uniform national standards of Assessor competency,
- That software tools are used in an accurate and consistent manner,
- That certification and documentation produced by an Assessor reflect accurately the settings and data entered into the software tool,
- That Assessors can achieve a high level of credibility and professionalism in their work, as with the ongoing support provided by the ABSA.

The rigorous application of these standards provides the public, certification authorities, and governing authorities with confidence in the quality assured Scheme within which Assessors practice.

## Training

The new National Qualification *Short Course in Building Thermal Performance Assessment (Residential)* has been developed by the NatHERS Administrator, on behalf of all Australian governments, and is the national standard being brought in with the introduction of 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation tools. To become an ABSA Accredited Assessor you will need to complete the National Qualification before undertaking the ABSA Accreditation Examination.

This course has been designed specifically around the use of 2nd Generation simulation software, and can be obtained through the attendance of training including some in-class assessment.

The National Qualification consists of three components:

- Design Theory (12 hours)
- Software (16 hours)
- Professional Practice (4 hours)

ABSA will be offering training in all modules required to complete the National Qualification. All ABSA training has been designed and will be delivered to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

For further information please consult the ABSA document detailing [2<sup>nd</sup> Generation Tools and the National Qualification](#) or consult the [ABSA training web page](#).

## ABSA National Accreditation

To become an ABSA Accredited Assessor you will need to pass the ABSA Accreditation Examination after completing the National Qualification training modules. The Accreditation Exam ensures that candidates demonstrate the level of competency in building thermal performance theory, 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation assessment software operation, and an understanding of regulations, required by a practicing Assessor. The exam is completed remotely by the Assessor. For more information on ABSA Accreditation please refer to document [Becoming an ABSA Accredited Assessor](#).

Exam fees will apply. The rate for examination is \$300 +GST

As second Generation software becomes available, Assessors who wish to take up its use will be required to complete the full National Qualification prior to using the software. Every Assessor can make this transition both to the National Qualification and use of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation software at any time until the eventual phasing out of 1<sup>st</sup> Generation tools in each State.

Existing ABSA Assessors will not be required to re-sit an Accreditation Exam.

## Assessor Support

Assessors receive support from various sources:

- ABSA Procedural Documents providing a quality assured system for conducting assessments;
- ABSA technical support staff available to assist by phone or email, 9am-5pm (EST) Monday-Friday;
- an Advisory Group comprising experienced Assessors that offers assistance to Assessors in rating complex dwellings;
- a web-based assessor forum facilitating exchange of ideas and solutions to problems;
- regular Assessor Briefings / forums;
- an ABSA Newsletter with important news and information for practising Assessors.

## Code of Practice and Assessor Procedures

A requirement of Accreditation is that all Assessors agree to abide by the ABSA Code of Practice (COP), which define standards for professional conduct. It covers communication with clients, disclosure of interests, privacy of information and promotion of services.

As defined in the ABSA COP Assessors agree to practice in accordance with ABSA Assessor Procedures, documents which defines rules for:

- sourcing and interpreting building data used for assessment;
- operation of assessment software; and
- reporting and certifying assessments.

ABSA has worked with both state and local government regulation requirements to develop uniform certification and documentation standards. This considerably reduces the processing resources required in local councils, and provides additional quality assurance measures.

## ABSA Accreditation Fees

ABSA Accreditation fees are paid annually. It is based on an equitable sliding scale of fees which is calculated on the number of ratings that an Assessor conducts and certifies annually. Credits for unused Certificates will be deducted from the following years annual fee. The number of Certificates issued is recorded by the ABSA certificate issuing tool.

Maximum number of assessments per annum	Annual Accreditation Fee
15	\$ 318
30	\$ 370
60	\$ 460
120	\$ 610
250	\$ 875
500	\$ 1,250
1000	\$ 1,750
2000	\$ 2,250

## ABSA Professional Indemnity Insurance Scheme

An additional requirement of the ABSA Code of Practice is that all Accredited Assessors must maintain adequate insurance to indemnify themselves for their role as an Accredited Assessor. This requirement provides Assessor's clients with the knowledge and confidence of suitable insurance protection for their work. It also protects Assessors in the event of errors.

ABSA assessors can benefit from a low cost Professional Indemnity insurance scheme that covers their sustainability assessment services. Fees for this insurance are determined according to the number of assessments conducted by the assessor. This insurance may be taken out concurrently with payment of accreditation fees.

Maximum number of assessments per annum	Professional Indemnity Insurance Cost
15	\$ 66
30	\$ 97
60	\$ 151
120	\$ 241
250	\$ 400
500	\$ 625
1000	\$ 925
2000	\$ 1225

Assessors may alternatively maintain Professional Indemnity insurance through any other provider if they desire.

## Continuing Professional Development Training

Assessors are offered professional development training to enable them to stay up-to-date with regulation and rating changes. To date these have focused on annual Assessor Briefing sessions that aim to ensure Assessors are kept abreast of regulatory and rating procedure changes.

## Further enquiries

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For enquiries relating to the ABSA National Accreditation Scheme please contact:

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