>> PROCEDURE DOCUMENT

ABSA HERS ASSESSMENT QA INFORMATION SHEET

1.0 PURPOSE

The Review of Assessor's HERS Assessment activities is a mandatory component of the NatHERS Protocol for an Assessor Accrediting Organisation. The Review process is designed to identify areas of concern, and provide feedback to assist with continual improvement of the NATHERS Accredited Assessor.

Although feedback is primarily for the Assessor, it also helps identify areas where ABSAs policy, guidelines, training or Government lobbying needs to be adjusted to achieve ongoing improvement in professional skills and development.

2.0 TERMINOLOGY

This program was originally referred to as 'Auditing'. Essentially, it is an auditing activity. However, the use of the term '**review**' has been substituted in all communication with Assessors and Reviewers.

This is to help all parties involved move from a view of the process as essentially disciplinary to a view of the process as primarily in support of the Assessors' continual improvement.

3.0 QUANTITY OF REVIEWS

The quantity of reviews is dictated each year by the requirements of the NatHERS AAO Protocol and is currently set at 20% of Accredited Assessors

These quantities apply both nationally, for each State and by software percentages used by Assessors wherever possible.

ABSA however, may also do additional reviews as required.

4.0 QA REVIEW LEVELS

Up until mid - 2016 there were 3 types of reviews undertaken.

NatHERS Protocol March 2016 (implemented 1 July 2016) now requires AAOs to undertake all reviews at Level 3.

4.1   LEVEL 3 REVIEWS

As of July 2016, the AAO Protocol requires ABSA's QA Reviews to be Level 3, where the Reviewer is required to check the information on one Assessment completed by the nominated Assessor in the last 12 months for-

- Universal Certificates for common errors and consistency of data input as agreed with the NatHERS Administrator
- a minimum number of critical fields, as agreed with the NatHERS Administrator
- the accuracy of postcode/climate zone selection
- investigate the software file and Universal Certificate against dwelling specification and drawing documentation to identify any errors; and
- score the accuracy of the Assessor's software inputs and processes. the consistency of ratings with results from similar construction types and climate zones.

5.0   ASSESSMENT SELECTION

Reviews will be selected in a multitude of different ways

An Assessor may also self-refer a project. However, they would usually be asked to pay the costs of the review and any ongoing correspondence or further analysis of their review.

6.0   QA REVIEW PROCESS

After an assessment is selected, the Assessor will receive an email outlining:

- Explanatory notes about the audit and documents required for review
- Timeframes for responding
- Advice about what to do if they find difficulty in complying with the audit requirements and/or the timeframes

On return the requested documents are sent to an external reviewer, to examine the Assessment and complete a report outlining any errors or discrepancies and the correct procedure.

The Assessor can ask for clarification about significant aspects of the report that they might have issue with (minor or inconsequential aspects will not be investigated).

ABSA will request the reviewer to check for errors and provide a brief bullet-point response to the Assessor's concerns or comments.

If errors that could have a bearing on the outcome of the report have occurred, the report will be re-written and sent to the Assessor and no further querying of the review will be entertained.

If the initial review is a Level 3 and the Assessor is not satisfied with the response they get from the reviewer, the management of ABSA will make a determination on the review.

This determination will consider the initial report, the reviewer's response to the request for clarification, and any other historical or circumstantial information that may have a bearing on the review.

Once ABSA management has made a determination, no further querying of the review will be entertained.

6.1 MISSING DOCUMENTATION

If during the audit the required information has not been provided the Assessor will be contacted and given an additional 5 working days to provide the information prior to suspension.

6.2 AFTER THE QA REVIEW

NatHERS Protocol requires a pass mark of 80% plus.

If an Assessor passes the QA Review they may still be audited again at any time in the future.

If an Assessor fails a review, the reviewer's recommendations <u>must</u> be followed.

Often this will be for a follow up review in 6 to 12 months, the requirement to undertake mandatory mentoring or training, or in the case of gross and/or intentional assessment errors, suspension of accreditation.

In some circumstances, if Mentoring has taken place and the Mentor is happy that the Assessor has addressed all issue highlighted by the Review, a moderate level ABSA Benchmarking Assessment may take the place of a follow up review.

6.3 REMEDIAL ACTION

The objective of Remedial Action is to support improved rating outcomes from underperforming Assessors.

This may take the form of Consultation reviewing errors / Mentoring / re-Training.

6.4 DISCIPLINARY ACTION

On the failure of a secondary QA Review, after Remedial Action (such as Mentoring / re- training) has taken place Disciplinary Action will take place.

This Disciplinary Action may take the form of the Suspension of an Assessors Accreditation until the AAO (ABSA) is satisfied that sufficient improvement has been demonstrated to pass a review.

If at any time an Assessor fails to comply or improve to such a standard to meet requirements, Cancelation of Accreditation may be undertaken.

Assessors found to be in <u>serious breach</u> of the QA requirements or who refuse to undertake mandatory mentoring, further reviews or training as required, or the determination of the management of ABSA will have their accreditation Cancelled.

Failure to comply with the audit program, or ongoing refusal to comply with remedial action will result in permanent cancelation of accreditation.