



**RIAS-regs**

# **Quality Assurance Guidance for Approved Bodies**

Version 5.0 May 2018

**RIAS**  
The Royal Incorporation  
of Architects in Scotland

## 1:00 Introduction

This document provides advice and guidance for Certification Coordinators and Approved Bodies regarding the Quality Assurance (QA) systems within which Approved Certifiers of Design should operate.

Certification Coordinators must familiarise themselves with the Scheme Guide and associated documents, including the Scheme Auditing Procedures. Section 4.5 of the Scheme Guide outlines a series of criteria with which an Approved Body must comply, in order to become, a member of the Scheme

### Criteria for Scheme Membership

1. Employ at least one Approved Certifier of Design
2. Have in place appropriate auditable checking procedures to assure the quality of certification activities (formal accreditation such as ISO90001 is not mandatory)
3. Agree to maintain adequate Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) for any project certified by an Approved Certifier of Design
4. Provide access for Approved Certifiers of Design to all relevant legislation, handbooks, codes, standards and guides
5. Make provision to promote the continuing professional development of Approved Certifiers of Design
6. Designate a Certification Coordinator to countersign certificates completed by an Approved Certifier of Design who is employed by the Approved Body
7. Undertake to understand the Scheme's requirements as described in this Scheme Guide and associated documentation
8. Undertake to abide by the Code of Conduct
9. Report any changes in staffing to the Schemes, with regard to Approved Certifiers of Design or the Certification Coordinator
10. Keep a logbook that demonstrates that certification is:
  - being undertaken in a diligent and thorough manner
  - that the Approved Body has in place the policies and procedures required by the Scheme
  - that the resources required by an Approved Certifier of Design are available, and
  - that records are available of all certificates issued, together with a record of the certified design – for full details see the Scheme's Quality Assurance Guidance for Approved Bodies, a copy of which is available at the Scheme website
11. Provide an Audit Return of their Certification Activities in line with the most recent version of RIAS – regs' Audit procedures.

Each of the preceding criteria is open to review during the audit of an Approved Body and Certification Coordinators are responsible for demonstrating that each of the above have been met and/or have put in place procedures to ensure that the criteria are met with.

Certification Coordinators should ensure that they have collated all the Scheme Guidance Documentation and that these are kept, along with copies of all certificates for the benefit of Certifiers and Auditors alike.

Certification Coordinators are responsible for implementing and managing an auditable checking regime which Approved Certifiers of Design must adhere to.

Where an Approved Body already has a well developed set of internal QA procedures then these should be supplemented, where they do not, then specific new procedures should be developed to ensure:

- The Certification Coordinator, any deputies, and all Approved Certifiers of Design have an understanding of their roles and responsibilities
- The management structure of the Approved Body is recorded, and it is clear who the Certification Coordinator, any deputies, and the Approved Certifier(s) of Design report to

- That if the Certification Coordinator is unavailable either a deputy or replacement is identified
- Where an Approved Body, Certification Coordinator and Approved Certifier of Design are effectively the same person and are a sole practitioner then it is important to have in place a reciprocal agreement with a fellow practitioner (in the case of Architects this is required by the Architects Registration Board) such that in the case of extended incapacity a fellow professional can advise clients, with regard to maintaining a continuity of service
- The Scheme Provider is kept fully informed of any relevant changes within the Approved Body
- That a complaints procedure is in place and is being adhered to.

The purpose of these Procedures is not to create an extra layer of bureaucracy and the above documentation should not be overly extensive. It is essential however that the Certification Coordinator has a simple set of rules, which allows them to manage the certification services offered by the Approved Body and oversees the checking processes followed by the Approved Certifier of Design to ensure that:

- in the event of their absence a replacement can step into their shoes with the minimum of disruption
- certification takes place in a quality assured environment
- adequate records of the certification process are maintained by the approved body

It is a requirement of membership of the RIAS-regs Schemes that all Approved Bodies develop a Quality Assurance Procedure within which Approved Certifiers of Design and Certification Coordinators operate.

This requirement is not intended to require the creation of large and unwieldy documentation. It is intended to ensure that those procedures which have been adopted by an Approved Body are documented and are available to Approved Certifiers of Design, Certification Coordinators and Auditors alike.

## **2:00 Logbook**

The key to such a Quality Assurance Procedure is the keeping of accurate records via a Certification Log Book. The Certification Log Book should hold information on the Approved Body, each Approved Certifier of Design and on all of the projects certified by the Approved Body. The logbook should ideally be electronic but can be a combination of electronic and hard copy. For example, where design drawings are routinely retained by the Approved Body in hard copy only, these can be signposted from the Certificate Checklist held in the electronic files for each certificate.

From a best practice perspective, it is recommended however that Approved Bodies retain as much information as possibly in the electronic logbook structured in line with the Logbook File Structure Guidance in Appendix A.

In March 2014 RIAS-regs introduced the requirement for an annual return. After review this will become a requirement for Biannual Audit Returns from January 2016. Approved Bodies are required to provide a complete copy of their electronic logbook to allow remote auditing. This will have major advantages in streamlining the auditing of Approved Certifiers of Design and Approved Bodies and in turn in the Scheme ensuring that certification practices as a whole are robust and high quality.

As noted above the logbook must contain all the Scheme Guidance and QA resources as well as the design information, such as drawings, specifications etc for each project. Where these are only available in hard copy only their location must be referenced and they must be readily retrievable. It is however important to emphasise that the certified design must be adequately recorded, and that no extraneous information is kept alongside the design information - for example earlier superseded versions of drawings and calculations.

Given the ease of electronic filing and the dominance of information held electronically this is most easily facilitated by creating electronic "certification only" files in line with the File Structure Guidance, populating the specific certificate files at the point of certification even where this might duplicate information held elsewhere. The emphasis is on being able to gather together everything to do with

certification to allow any Approved Certifier of Design, Certification Coordinator or Auditor to quickly identify and appraise those designs that have been certified.

Ultimately this is no more than the requirement of any professionally run consultancy and the adoption of this routine practice will aid Approved Bodies in working in a diligent and thorough manner. It is also a requirement of the Scheme and BSD that all certification records are retained for a minimum of 25 years (the same duty imposed on Local Authorities to retain building warrant records) and in the unfortunate scenario where an Approved Body is drawn into any legal action (whether party to it or not) the Courts would expect this information to be readily available.

Approved Bodies must take steps to ensure that all electronic files are regularly backed up in a secure manner to avoid the loss of such information.

Finally, and at the risk of contradicting the above, Approved Bodies may find some benefit in maintaining to hand hardcopies of individual certificates & checklists etc, in order to be able to answer immediate queries and reference quickly individual projects.

## Appendix A: Quality Assurance Procedure Template

The following template is available from RIAS-regs as a word document:

### Introduction

This document sets out the internal Quality Assurance procedures of \_\_\_\_\_ (insert name of Approved Body)

### Management of the Approved Body

Describe the business structure of the Approved Body

\_\_\_\_\_ (insert name of Approved Body) is managed by \_\_\_\_ Partners / Directors:

List Partners / Directors

\_\_\_\_\_ have overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of the business and \_\_\_\_\_ (name of Partner / Director) has direct responsibility for Certification and reporting to them are:

\_\_\_\_\_ Certification Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_ Deputy Certification Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_ Approved Certifier of Design

\_\_\_\_\_ Approved Certifier of Design

\_\_\_\_\_ Approved Certifier of Design

### Knowledge and Understanding

IT is vital to the process of Certifying the design of a building that each member of the Approved Body understands their role and responsibility.

The Certification Coordinator and any deputy must manage the certification procedures in line with the RIAS-regs Scheme Guide and other documents, a full list of which will be published on the Scheme website [www.RIAS-regs.co.uk](http://www.RIAS-regs.co.uk)

No one may act in the role of an Approved Certifier of Design unless they are approved by and have a current membership with the RIAS – Energy Design Certification.

The Certification Coordinator must ensure that the Approved Certifiers of Design have access to both the Scheme Guidance and other documents as well as copies of the Scottish Building Standards Technical Handbooks and to those reference documents that are relevant to certification which are referred to therein.

### Absence or Incapacity

In the event that a Certification Coordinator or Approved Certifier of Design is unavailable due to absence or incapacity then \_\_\_\_\_ will take steps to appoint replacements.

Where a replacement Approved Certifier of Design inherits a project, they will take steps to reappraise any works previously certified, before issuing any subsequent Certificates of Design.

## Reporting to the Scheme Provider

The Certification Coordinator has the day-to-day responsibility of ensuring that RIAS – Energy Design Certification Scheme is informed of any changes to personnel, complaints received and any disputes that are resolved.

If the Certification Coordinator is unavailable due to absence or incapacity, then \_\_\_\_\_ will take steps to appoint a replacement and provide interim reports as require.

The Certification Coordinator must respond to any communications from RIAS – Design Certification Scheme in as timely a manner as possible.

## Logbook

The Certification Coordinator will establish and maintain a Logbook.

### CPD and Information

\_\_\_\_\_ (insert name of Approved Body) will maintain copies of the Technical Handbooks of the Scottish Building Standards and those documents referenced with regard to Section 6 in either hard or electronic copy.

All Approved Certifiers of Design must undertake a minimum of 10 hours of related CPD, which may also be counted towards the requirements of other professional bodies

### Complaints Procedure

\_\_\_\_\_ (insert name of Approved Body) will establish and maintain a Complaints Procedure, the day-to-day administration of which is undertaken by the Certification Coordinator under the direct management of \_\_\_\_\_ (name Partner / Director)

### Record Keeping

At the centre of a quality assurance process is the requirement to document the procedures in place, adhere to them and record that adherence.

The Certification Coordinator (or their deputy) is responsible for this process.

Alongside retaining the records required for the Log Book the Certification Coordinator should regularly report back to the management of the Approved Body confirming the number of Certificates, type of projects certified, the number of complaints received, and actions taken etc.

## Appendix B: Certification Process

Step	Actions	Record Keeping
1	Initial Enquiry from Client	
2 – may be repeated more than once	Approved Body agrees the extent of the services required and obtains clients instructions to proceed	The Approved Certifier of Design establishes a project file and files letters and emails that establish the contract
3	<p>The Approved Certifier of Design receives copies of the draft warrant application drawings – these may or may not have been prepared as part of a wider design service by the Approved Certifier of Design / Approved Body.</p> <p>The Approved Certifier of Design undertakes a design check using the Certification Checklist, undertaking those energy calculations that may be required.</p>	<p>Any missing information, non-compliances and conflicts with other parts of the regulations are brought to the designer's attention.</p> <p>Details to be recorded in the project file.</p>
4	<p>The Approved Certifier of Design receives copies of the final warrant application drawings – these may or may not have been prepared as part of a wider design service by the Approved Certifier of Design / Approved Body.</p> <p>The Approved Certifier of Design completes the design checks using the Certification Checklist revising those energy calculations that may be required.</p>	<p>The Approved Certifier of Design completes the on-line certification procedure and records any contractor designed elements in a Schedule 1 if required.</p> <p>The on-line data system records the building type, methodology and regulatory checklist.</p>
5	The Approved Certifier of Design generates a Certificate of Design in the Scheme's on-line IT system and signs, where required, and passes the Certification Checklist, Certificate of Design and Schedule 1 etc to the Certification Coordinator.	The Approved Certifier of Design adds copies of the documents to the project file.
6	The Certification Coordinator counter signs the Certificate and issues it (and any Schedule 1) to the client.	The Certification Coordinator files copies of these and the Certification Checklist in the Certification Log Book

## Appendix C: Complaints Procedure Template

The following template is available from RIAS-regs as a word document:

### Introduction

This document sets out the procedures to be followed on the receipt of a complaint. For the purposes of this document a complaint can be received from:

- A member of the public
- A client
- A local authority Verifier
- An Approved Certifier of Design
- The Building Standards Division of the Scottish Government (BSD)
- Other public body, police authority etc

Alternatively if RIAS-regs receives a complaint about an Approved Certifier of Design or an Approved Body, their first action will usually be to pass that complaint to the appropriate Approved Body in the first instance.

The first thing to establish is the nature and validity of any complaint. For a complaint to be considered it must:

- be made in writing and
- be from a person or body who has a relationship with the subject of the complaint and confirm the full nature of that relationship and
- detail the nature of the complaint

Examples of complaints that might be received are:

- a client (who has applied for a warrant) is unhappy with the time taken by an Approved Certifier of Design to produce a Certificate of Design.
- a verifier may raise concerns regarding a design which has been certified

This is by no means a comprehensive list and merely serves to show the range of potential complaints.

### Dealing with Complaints

On receiving a complaint \_\_\_\_\_ (enter name of Approved Body) will immediately notify RIAS – Energy Design Certification the steps which are being taken to resolve the complaint in as timely a manner as possible, while ensuring each of the steps outlined below is followed.

In dealing with complaints a Senior Member of Staff \_\_\_\_\_ (enter name and role of member of staff) has been appointed to assess the validity of the complaint and takes those steps deemed necessary to resolve any dispute.

The Certification Coordinator will record all complaints received and undertake the administrative steps outlined below including reporting back to the senior member of staff. The Certification Coordinator will also maintain an overall record of complaints received and the resolution of these.

The Certification Coordinator has overall responsibility for co-coordinating the response to any complaint received, by requesting and collating information, convening meetings and notifying relevant parties.



If on initial investigation the Senior Member of Staff considers the nature of the complaint to be sufficiently serious and considers the complaint to be well founded (for example an allegation of fraud) the Senior Member of staff should take such steps as are required to suspend the Certifier, pending further investigation.

#### Procedures and Time Scales

It is important that complaints are dealt with as quickly as possible. On receipt of a complaint the Senior Member of staff (or a named deputy) will, within 5 working days:

- notify RIAS – Energy Design Certification of the complaint, unless the complaint has been passed on from the Scheme in which case this will be acknowledged
- acknowledge receipt of the complaint to the complainant, in writing
- seek to establish the broad facts of the subject of the complaint
- notify the Approved Certifier of Design that they are the subject of a complaint, and request from them a written response within 15 working days

After due consideration of the matter to hand and based on a thorough investigation the Senior Member of Staff may choose to follow one or more routes depending on their conclusions:

- report in writing to the complainant that they consider the complaint to be unfounded and that they intend to take no further action. In doing so they must remind the complainant that they are entitled to complain directly to RIAS – Energy Design Certification
- suggest some measure of remedial action or mediation with the complainant
- seek guidance from RIAS – Energy Design Certification with regard to the subject of the complaint
- advise RIAS – Energy Design Certification that there has been a serious flaw in the process of Certification and that immediate steps are required to suspend a particular Approved Certifier of Design

In all instances the Senior Member of Staff is responsible for communicating effectively with the complainant and RIAS-regs, as well as the relevant authorities and stakeholders.

APPROVED BODY LOGBOOK FILE STRUCTURE

SCHEME DOCUMENTS

- SCHEME GUIDE
- LEARNING MODULES
- CODE OF CONDUCT
- QUALITY ASSURANCE GUIDANCE FOR APPROVED BODIES
- GUIDE TO STAGED WARRANTS, SCHEDULE 1 AND FORM Q
- ROLE OF HEAD OF CERTIFICATION
- AUDIT PROCEDURES
- COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE
- INVALID CERTIFICATES
- MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA
- APPROVED CERTIFIER OF DESIGN MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATE
- APPROVED BODIES MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATE

THESE DOCUMENTS CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM [www.rias-rega.co.uk](http://www.rias-rega.co.uk)

QUALITY ASSURANCE

- QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURE
- COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE
- COMPLAINTS RECORD
- COMPLAINT FILE CERTIFICATE C000001
  - DOCUMENTS
- COMPLAINT FILE CERTIFICATE C000002
  - DOCUMENTS
- ETC

QUALITY AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURES TEMPLATES AVAILABLE FROM [www.rias-rega.co.uk](http://www.rias-rega.co.uk)

GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS

- DECLARATION OF DOCUMENTS
- BUILDING REGULATIONS
  - 2009 DOMESTIC
  - 2010 DOMESTIC
  - 2011 DOMESTIC
  - ETC
- Building (Scotland) Act 2003
- Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004
- The Building (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2006
- The Building (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2007
- The Building (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2008
- The Building (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2009
- The Building (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2010
- Building (Procedures) (Scotland) Regulations 2004
- Building (Fees) (Scotland) Regulations 2005
- The Energy Performance of Buildings (Scotland) Regulations 2008
- FURTHER GUIDANCE
  - B8D (2007) Scottish Building Standards Technical Handbook: Domestic/ Non-domestic
  - B8D (2008) Scottish Building Standards Technical Handbook: Domestic/ Non-domestic
  - B8D (2009) Scottish Building Standards Technical Handbook: Domestic/ Non-domestic
  - B8D (2010) Scottish Building Standards Technical Handbook: Domestic/ Non-domestic
  - B8D (2013) Scottish Building Standards Technical Handbook: Domestic/ Non-domestic
  - B8D (2009) Scottish Building Standards Certification Handbook for schemes
  - B8D (2007) Accredited Construction Details
  - House Improvements - A sustainability guide
  - Guide to the Condensing Boiler Installation Assessment Procedure for Dwellings
  - BR 443 (2006 Edition) U-Values, 'conventions for U-Value calculations'
  - BRE Report 262
  - BRE 497 - Conventions for calculating linear thermal transmittance and temperature factors
  - BRE IP 1/06 - Assessing the effects of thermal bridging at junctions and around openings
  - CE29 Domestic Heating by Oil
  - CE30 Domestic Heating by Gas
  - CE47 Domestic Heating by Solid Fuel

REFER TO SCHEME GUIDANCE AND TECHNICAL HANDBOOKS FOR LOCATION OF DOCUMENTS FOR DOWNLOAD

THIS LIST IS NOT COMPREHENSIVE AND BOTH NEW AND SUPERCEDED DOCUMENTS SHOULD BE RETAINED

