

CIBSE CERTIFICATION LTD

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Foreword

2020 will long be remembered as the year that COVID-19 happened. On reflection, CIBSE Certification Ltd has weathered that storm quite well. In 2020, CIBSE Certification continued to work to raise the profile of the scheme to reinforce the reputation of Low Carbon Consultants (LCCs) and Low Carbon Energy Assessors (LCEAs) for high quality, expert services. This was achieved with the whole team working remotely. Most of the customer facing services were already available online, and recent improvements to the administrative support systems meant that everything needed by staff could be accessed remotely.

On this basis, during 2020 CIBSE Certification continued to certify the competence of energy professionals with over 750 certified energy assessors for the purposes of the Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations including 60 in Scotland and over 900 Low Carbon Consultants. Feedback from ESOS Lead Assessors suggests that much reporting work carried over into 2020 despite 2019 being the ESOS reporting year.

For CIBSE Certification, the LCC Register is an important mechanism for raising competence across the industry. Since 2015 we have had UKAS accreditation to certify Energy Management Systems (ISO 50001) which meant that CIBSE Certification was also able to support companies operating Energy Management Systems, by providing third party verification that their systems are being operated in conformity with the Standard. In 2018, CIBSE Certification extended this capability achieving UKAS accreditation to certify Quality Management Systems in conformity with ISO 9001:2015. Arguably the biggest COVID-19 related setback to CIBSE Certification in 2020 was the further delay in accreditation to ISO 14001:2015. CIBSE Certification remained fully operational throughout 2020 and did not lay-off or furlough any staff.

The Background

The LCEA scheme grew from the activities associated with the development of the Low Carbon Consultants (LCC) Register. The LCC register was started in 2006 with the aid of a Carbon Trust grant. Its objective was to produce a cadre of individuals with expertise in carbon management both in the design and operation of buildings. It also offered registration to those with expertise in building simulation. In January 2008, with the approval of CIBSE Certification's application to be a certification body for energy assessors, the existing low carbon expertise of this group, and new applicants, were used to create a new register – Low Carbon Energy Assessors (LCEA). In 2010, a new register was opened to showcase the expertise of consultants able to implement Energy Management Systems in accordance with the international standard, ISO 50001. The accreditation of CIBSE Certification to certify Energy Management Systems has raised the profile of this Register. Using CIBSE Certification, individuals can be certified competent and where appropriate, registered under the following categories (2020 numbers Registered):

LCC Design (709)
LCC Design (Scotland) (80)
LCC Operation (208)
LCC Simulation (531)
LCC Energy Management Systems (37)
LCEA EPC L3/4 (351)
LCEA EPC L5 (387)

LCEA EPC (Scotland) (67)
LCEA DEC (145)
Air Conditioning Inspector (87)
Section 63 Adviser (Scotland)
ESOS Lead Assessor (191)
Heat Networks Consultant (85)

Review of 2020

CIBSE Certification maintained close contact with their trade association PEPA (Property and Energy Professional Association) and their contacts in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to make sure energy assessors had access to the most up to date advice on working safely in the early lockdown period and beyond.

During this period CIBSE Certification Low Carbon Energy Assessors continued to provide a certification service where it was safe to do so, and where for example, with DEC renewals and new build EPCs, no site visit was required. Initially, in April and May, there was a dip in lodgement activity but it did recover during the rest of the year. To put this into context, largely due to the MEES regulations we believe, we had seen year on year increases in lodgements since 2016. By the end of 2020, our lodgement sales had almost reached the number achieved in 2016, a normal trading year.

Make-up of the Register

The majority of LCEAs were previously LCCs and many are also CIBSE members. CIBSE Certification certifies individuals to be energy assessors under the Approval of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) route where experience as well as knowledge and understanding is assessed, typically including design and specification of energy using systems in buildings. They generally have the background and experience which would make it unnecessary to take a further vocational qualification in energy assessment to produce Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs), Display Energy Certificates (DECs) or Air Conditioning Inspections. CIBSE Certification also welcomes applications from individuals holding appropriate vocational qualifications.

The introduction of the ESOS Lead Assessors and the subsequent revitalising of the LCC (EnMS) Register has continued the broadening of the LCC register with many professionals from related fields being attracted to CIBSE Certification as the place to go for energy professionals.

Lodgements

Lodgement evidence suggests that most CIBSE Certification Low Carbon Energy Assessors do not expect to carry out energy assessments full time, but rather offer assessments as part of a portfolio of services, or to complete other work already being undertaken. We believe that this has changed slightly over the last 2 or 3 years with more work being triggered by MEES Regulation requirements. 2020 Lodgement figures for England & Wales:

EPC L3/4 – 2662 (82 were audited which is 3.1%)
EPC L5 – 2639 Subject to a separate audit regime
DEC – 5630 (158 were audited which is 2.8%)
Air Conditioning Inspection Reports – 683 (25 were audited which is 3.7%)

LCEA application process

Those who apply for energy assessor certification (DEC or EPC) through CIBSE Certification Ltd take the following route:

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

For the Air Conditioning strand applicants take the following route:

1. Supply a CV and personal statement for pre-screening using the online Pre-APEL system
2. If successful at pre-screening, the applicant will:
 - 2.1. Complete the online APEL, including submission of documents such as insurance, CPD record, Code of Conduct.
 - 2.2. Arrange top-up training if necessary on TM44 requirements.
 - 2.3. Online APEL forms are reviewed by an independent APEL assessor to determine compliance with APEL requirements.
3. If all aspects are satisfactory the applicant is 'Provisionally Approved'.
4. The applicant submits three example air conditioning inspection reports which are assessed by a qualified independent assessor to see if they are deemed satisfactory.
5. If all elements are to the required standard and meet the scheme requirements, the applicant will be certified.

Great care is taken to ensure that only those with genuine competence and experience in the industry are admitted to the CIBSE Certification scheme. CIBSE Certification Low Carbon Energy Assessors are recognised by clients as offering a high degree of experience and competence in providing solutions which will work in practice. Therefore, each application is thoroughly reviewed by independent APEL assessors selected for their knowledge and experience, who are familiar with the requirements of the APEL regime and the National Occupational Standards.

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

Quality Assurance – Audit Procedure and Methodology

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

Each month, a sample of LCEAs is identified for auditing. In line with the requirements set out by MHCLG, a minimum of two per cent of certificates lodged are audited and selected using risk-based criteria.

The objective of the Quality Assurance system is to provide a fair, consistent and robust audit procedure and methodology. Documents describing the audit procedure and methodology have been entered and recorded into CIBSE Certification management and document systems setting down the audit methodology, audit procedures, and the MHCLG requirements.

Internally, the lodgement system performs electronic analysis providing additional support to the quality assurance process, checking the consistency of data input (assessor and building details) revealing any errors before a lodgement is attempted.

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

Code of Conduct: LCEAs are reminded of the importance of maintaining the standards of their profession. The CIBSE Certification Code of Conduct is revised as necessary and all LCEAs are required to return a signed copy of the up to date version to CIBSE Certification. They should make all in-house teams aware of the Code of Conduct and have copies readily available. The Code of Conduct should also be communicated to any third parties commissioned by the LCEA to contribute to the production of energy certificates.

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

Having the knowledge that the LCEA has been through a thorough and rigorous assessment process from CIBSE Certification gives confidence that they are getting a competent and professional service. The Certification of individuals for the LCC Design, Operation and Simulation registers, and for EPC and DEC production is also accredited by UKAS to BS EN ISO 17024 Certification of Persons.

LCC application process

1. Decide – which Low Carbon Consultant register(s) you wish to apply for.
2. Evaluation – be successfully assessed (which may be an examination) for LCC Design Management, LCC Building Operation and/or for use of Dynamic Simulation Modelling (DSM) or Simplified Building Energy Model (SBEM) software of your choice.
3. Application – complete the application form for the LCC Register(s) and submit
 - 3.1 copies of exam certificates
 - 3.2 a current and applicable Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) certificate
 - 3.3 a signed CIBSE Certification Code of Conduct
4. Review - of the Certification file and Certification Decision
5. Certification – Payment processed, and applicant added to relevant LCC Register(s).
6. Maintenance of certification – ongoing specific requirements.
7. Recertification – Certification is renewed every three years if specific requirements are met.

ESOS Lead Assessor application process

1. Apply - to become a Low Carbon Consultant if not already. You may apply to become a Low Carbon Consultant and an ESOS Lead Assessor at the same time.
2. Evaluation – undertake ESOS training and assessment.
3. Application – complete and submit the ESOS application form along with:
 - 3.1 a copy of your exam certificate
 - 3.2 a detailed CV of experience in energy improvement related work
 - 3.3 a current and applicable Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) certificate
 - 3.4 a signed CIBSE Certification Code of Conduct
4. Review - of the Certification file and Certification Decision
5. Certification – Payment processed, and applicant added to relevant ESOS Register.
6. Maintenance of certification – ongoing specific requirements.
7. Recertification – Certification is renewed every three years if specific requirements are met.

Heat Networks Consultant application process

1. Apply – to become a Heat Networks Consultant.
2. Evaluation – pass the Heat Networks Consultant examination.
3. Application – complete and submit the HNC application form along with:
 - 3.1 a copy of your exam certificate
 - 3.2 a current and applicable Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) certificate
 - 3.3 a signed CIBSE Certification Code of Conduct
4. Review - of the Certification file and Certification Decision
The outcome of this review is either certification, a request to provide additional information or in some circumstances a rejection.
5. Certification –payment processed, and applicant added to the Heat Networks Consultants Register.
6. Maintenance of certification – ongoing specific requirements.
7. Recertification – Certification is renewed every three years if specific requirements are met.

CIBSE Certification Support - Email Management System

Customer response – E-mail enquiries / software applications

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

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

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

Customer Communication Performance 2020

A total of 11800 tickets were dealt with in 2020. A sample of cases relating to Energy Performance of Buildings are illustrated below and show that the aim of responding to enquiries within 24 hours is being achieved.

<i>Description</i>	<i>Example folders</i>	<i>Average response time</i>
Support Requests	Code of Conduct – 1091 tickets	7.6 Hours
	Support - Case Cancellation - 178 tickets	15.4 Hour
	Support-EPC - 617 tickets	10.9 Hours
	Support-General Technical - 80 tickets	13 Hours
	Support-Lodgements - 457	17.3 Hours
	Support-Software - 69	22.4 Hours

Finance

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

- the unpredictable economic environment which may reduce absolute numbers of EPCs required
- continuing low levels of compliance with the regulations
- competition to provide lowest cost building energy certificates has resulted in customer expectations of low cost and low value, which is inconsistent with the quality approach of CIBSE Certification certified LCEAs.

The relatively low level of compliance, particularly in respect of commercial EPCs and air conditioning inspection reports, has become a matter of concern. It affected the ability of the Energy Performance in Buildings Regulations to contribute to the UK achieving its carbon targets. In 2020, CIBSE Certification

has continued to work closely with the cross-industry group PEPA to raise awareness of non-compliance issues with all relevant stakeholders. The Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS) introduced for the private rented sector do appear to have changed this with EPC lodgements having increased for 3 years in succession.

CIBSE Certification views LCCs and LCEAs as important in raising competence across the industry and for providing a much needed cadre of competent persons who can play an active role in reducing the carbon emissions of the UK. Therefore, it is committed to continue to invest in the LCC and LCEA schemes and indeed to extend its influence as demonstrated with the development of the ESOS Lead Assessor Register and the certification of Energy Management Systems.

Looking forward

CIBSE Certification will continue to work to maintain and enhance the position of the scheme, raising the profile of CIBSE Certification registrants and to fully service their existing needs with ongoing support and development opportunities.

At the same time, CIBSE Certification is committed to building on the quality of its existing scheme and operations and introducing new areas of business. ISO 50001 was introduced in 2015 and ISO 9001 accreditation in 2018, soon to be followed by ISO 14001 and ISO 45001. This will enable us to meet client requirements where they are seeking an integrated management system approach. We will also be looking to introduce new competency schemes in the coming years. The accreditation process for ISO 14001 has been delayed by the COVID-19 situation which in turn has also delayed ISO 45001, however 2020 saw a sharp upturn in business in the area as businesses started to work with CIBSE Certification in anticipation of achieving UKAS accreditation. That translated to a threefold increase in income from this area of activity in 2020 although contribution to the bottom line was not proportional to this as we are still in a development phase with associated costs.

CIBSE Certification in 2020

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