



Guide for Candidates

What is ABBE and where are they based?

The Awarding Body for the Built Environment (ABBE) specialises in qualifications related to the building and construction industries. ABBE provides accreditation for vocational qualifications in a number of subjects, including energy assessment, site management, surveying, planning and project management, home inspection and valuation.

As an awarding body, ABBE's role is to develop qualifications which are responsive to the needs of the built environment industry. It also approves the organisations that deliver them, sets examinations and assessments, and issues certificates to successful candidates. All ABBE qualifications are recognised by employers and institutions across the UK.

ABBE offers its vocational awards to individuals and employers through a network of assessment centres. These centres are approved against a set of national criteria laid down by Ofqual (the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator). The centres, including colleges and training organisations, deliver ABBE qualifications to strictly regulated standards. Many have sites across the UK or offer long distance study, so even if you don't live near an ABBE approved centre it is still possible to take an ABBE qualification.

As an awarding body, ABBE has ultimate responsibility for:

- quality assurance of the assessment and verification of candidates undertaking qualifications through ABBE approved assessment centres
- registration and tracking of candidate progress over time
- issue of qualification certificates

Contact details

ABBE
Birmingham City University
Franchise Street
Perry Barr
Birmingham
B42 2SU

Tel: 0121 331 5174
Fax: 0121 331 6883
Email: abbeenquiries@bcu.ac.uk
Website: www.abbeqa.co.uk

How are ABBE qualifications accessed?

ABBE is responsible for developing qualifications and associated examinations. These qualifications are offered through a network of assessment centres that are approved by ABBE. For some qualifications the centre also has responsibility for assessment of candidates.

Please note that ABBE does not provide any training directly. Candidates wishing to undertake an ABBE qualification must be registered with an approved assessment centre. Details of all of ABBE's approved assessment centres can be found on the ABBE website at www.abbeqa.co.uk.

What does 'approved by ABBE' actually mean?

When an organisation wishes to offer ABBE qualifications they apply to become an approved assessment centre. ABBE evaluates the organisation's systems and procedures against a set of national criteria laid down by Ofqual. This evaluation focuses specifically on the systems and procedures to support the assessment and internal quality assurance processes and, therefore, candidates can be assured that the quality of provision at the centre is acceptable. It should be noted that ABBE has no remit in relation to an organisation's business or financial practices, therefore, potential candidates are advised to carry out whatever checks they feel necessary to establish that they are happy to proceed with a particular course or training programme with an individual approved centre.

What support is available to achieve an ABBE qualification?

All ABBE qualifications have been developed to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to access in relation to the language used, the evidence required or the assessment mechanisms. All ABBE approved assessment centres must ensure that, when registered for an ABBE qualification, you:

- receive equal treatment regardless of gender, sexual orientation, colour, ethnic or national origin, age, marital status, family circumstances, socio-economic background, disability, religious or political beliefs
- have equal access to fair assessment of the skills and knowledge required to achieve an ABBE qualification

Assessment centres must provide details of the assessor and internal verifier they have allocated to you as soon as is practicable after enrolment. Assessment centres should also make you aware of the external verification process involved with these qualifications.

There are 'reasonable adjustments' that can be made in some circumstances to assist candidates in accessing ABBE qualifications. Your assessment centre will advise you as to what is available and suitable for your needs and for your particular qualification.

What documentation is available for ABBE qualifications?

Current versions of all ABBE documentation, including Qualification Handbooks and examination timetables, are available on the ABBE website, www.abbega.co.uk and in hard copy from the ABBE office on request.

How are ABBE examinations accessed?

All ABBE examinations are currently timetabled on set dates and times and are offered at venues organised by assessment centres. Candidates should contact their assessment centre for details of how to access the examination. Examination timetables are available on the ABBE website at www.abbega.co.uk. As well as showing the date and time of scheduled examinations, they also provide the date by which the results will be issued to assessment centres.

Candidates must be registered with an approved assessment centre to sit an examination. When you are registered for an ABBE qualification, a unique registration number will be provided to your assessment centre. This must be used either to log into the ABBE on-line examination or, for paper based examinations, quoted on your answer sheet.

Access to examinations is not available directly through ABBE.

Please note that all examination results are issued to assessment centres by the 'results issued' date published on each examination timetable. Candidates must contact their assessment centre for details of results; under no circumstances will results be issued directly to candidates by ABBE.

What feedback is available from ABBE examinations?

General feedback on performance in examinations can be provided free of charge by ABBE on request. ABBE will accept requests from both assessment centres and candidates, however we would always advise candidates to discuss this with their assessment centre before sending a request themselves. The request should be emailed to abbeenquiries@bcu.ac.uk and should include the candidate's name, ABBE registration number, assessment centre name, qualification title and date of examination. This feedback is designed for candidates to discuss with their assessor to identify areas for revision.

As all examinations come from a live question bank, it is not possible to provide copies of examination questions or answers.

What is the appeals process in relation to examination results?

ABBE has a standard procedure to process all examination results before issue to assessment centres. This includes a review of the performance of all questions in the examination, focusing particularly on those where a low number, or a high number, of candidates selected the correct answer; and any feedback provided from invigilators and candidates. Dependent upon the findings of this review, the examination results are moderated accordingly before being released for issue.

Where a centre or candidate disagrees with, or wishes to question, the results provided for an ABBE external assessment, a results enquiry can be made to ABBE. It should be noted that, as all questions in ABBE multiple choice examinations come from a live question bank, it is not possible for ABBE to provide details of specific questions or answers as part of this process.

All results enquiries must be applied for using the **ABBE Request for Results Enquiry Form** (see Appendix 1) and attaching the relevant fee (see ABBE Fees List).

All applications must be made within two weeks of the results being issued.

ABBE will review the results of the candidate concerned along with the issues/concerns specified on the application form and provide a written response in line with the timescales published in our **Customer Service Statement** (see Appendix 2).

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this, you may then make an appeal to ABBE.

What is the appeals process in relation to centre-assessed units?

If you are in disagreement with your assessor concerning the assessment of verified units, you have the right to refer the matter to:

- The internal verifier within your assessment centre
- The centre manager, if the matter is still unresolved
- In writing (using the form provided at Appendix 3) to ABBE who will then arrange for the external verifier to investigate on your behalf. Your request must include details of all correspondence with your centre in relation to this matter. ABBE will only accept an appeal from a candidate if the above steps have already been taken.

Making an appeal

All parties must make every effort to resolve a problem or dispute informally before instigating a formal appeal.

All appeals must be made to ABBE in writing using the **ABBE Request for Appeal** form (see Appendix 3) and within fifteen working days of the decision that is being appealed against. This communication must set out the full grounds of the appeal and must be accompanied by the appropriate fee (see ABBE Fees List).

ABBE will give written acknowledgement of the appeal and an indication of the timescale within which a response will be provided to the appellant.

Stage 1: The appeal will be investigated by an ABBE nominated representative who will consult with all relevant parties to establish the facts, including the nature of the appeal and the principal areas of dispute.

Following the investigation, the outcome will be communicated to the appellant.

If the appellant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, they can request progress to Stage 2. This request must be provided in writing within fifteen working days of receipt of the outcome of Stage 1.

Stage 2: The case will then be referred to the ABBE Appeals Panel who will consider all of the facts and make a decision as to whether the case should be upheld.

ABBE will inform the appellant in writing of the outcome of the appeal and any action required.

Where an appeal is upheld the fee will be refunded to the appellant.

What is the process for reporting malpractice or fraudulent behaviour?

During your time working towards an ABBE qualification, if you witness any suspected or potential malpractice by another candidate or by an assessment centre, this must be reported immediately to ABBE.

What is the process for applying for a replacement certificate?

Replacement of damaged certificates

Candidates can apply for replacement of damaged certificates. The request must be made in writing, accompanied by the original certificate. A fee is payable for this service; see the ABBE fees list for details.

Replacement of lost certificates

Candidates can apply for replacement of lost certificates. The request must be made using the form ***Application for a replacement certificate*** (see Appendix 4).

It will only be possible to replace a lost certificate if it can be clearly seen from the evidence provided that all possible action has been taken by the centre and/or the candidate to retrieve it. A fee is payable for this service; see the ABBE fees list for details.

What is the process for making a complaint?

Service received from Assessment Centre

If you have a complaint about the service that has been provided to you by your assessment centre, your first step will be to follow the complaints procedure of the centre to give them an opportunity to address your concerns.

If you do not receive a satisfactory resolution to your issues from following this route, your complaint should be put in writing to the Chief Executive at ABBE at the address below.

It should be noted that ABBE's remit as an awarding body does not extend to the financial arrangements made between assessment centres and candidates; therefore, if your complaint relates to this aspect unfortunately we would not be able to assist. Advice on this may need to be sought from an independent body such as Trading Standards or Citizens Advice Bureau.

Service received from ABBE

We hope that the service provided to you by ABBE is satisfactory, however if you wish to make a complaint about any aspect of this service this should be sent in writing to the Chief Executive at the address below.

Chief Executive
ABBE
Birmingham City University
Franchise Street
Perry Barr
Birmingham
B42 2SU

What should I do in the unlikely event that I am unable to complete my qualification with my assessment centre?

In a case such as this, you would need to make arrangements with another assessment centre to continue your qualification. ABBE would assist you as much as possible with this. The new centre would assess your progress so far and advise on how they could assist you. It is likely that there would be a charge for this completing your qualification elsewhere.

In relation to recouping any fees paid to your original assessment centre, it should be noted that ABBE's remit does not extend to financial or contractual arrangements made between candidates and assessment centres, therefore, you would be advised to seek legal advice in a case such as this.



REQUEST FOR RESULTS ENQUIRY

Where a centre or candidate disagrees with the results provided for an ABBE external assessment, a results enquiry can be made to ABBE. All applications must be made within two weeks of the results being issued.

ABBE will review the candidate's results taking into account the reasons for the enquiry as stated below.

A fee is payable for this service (please see ABBE Fees List available on the website at www.abbeqa.co.uk or by calling 0121 331 5174). Requests from candidates must be accompanied by a cheque made payable to 'ABBE Limited'. Requests received from assessment centres will be invoiced.

CENTRE NAME:
CENTRE ADDRESS:
TELEPHONE NUMBER:
EMAIL ADDRESS:

QUALIFICATION TITLE:

DATE OF EXAMINATION:

CANDIDATE NUMBER	NAME OF CANDIDATE
CANDIDATE CONTACT DETAILS	

REASON FOR ENQUIRY (where applicable, include all relevant information relating to use of examination paper, venue, equipment, etc)

NAME:

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

Please return to: ABBE, Birmingham City University, Franchise Street, Perry Barr, Birmingham, B42 2SU or via email to abbeenquiries@bcu.ac.uk



CUSTOMER SERVICE STATEMENT

ABBE (Awarding Body for the Built Environment) is regulated by Ofqual (Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator) to quality assure nationally recognised vocational qualifications, accredited to the National Qualifications Framework and Qualifications and Credit Framework.

The awarding body has ultimate responsibility for:

- quality assurance of the assessment and verification of candidates undertaking qualifications through ABBE approved assessment centres
- registration and tracking of candidate progress over time
- issue of qualification certificates

ABBE CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

ABBE will:

- Respond to all telephone messages within five working days.
- Acknowledge and, where possible, respond to all written communications (email messages and letters) within ten working days.
- Acknowledge applications for approval as an assessment centre or approval for additional qualifications within ten working days of receipt of the application form.
- Provide confirmation of decisions on centre approval and approval to offer additional qualifications within ten working days of receipt of an evaluation visit report.
- Request completion of an external verification pre-visit planning form by a centre at least fifteen working days before the external verification visit is scheduled to take place.
- Return a completed Ongoing Centre Monitoring Report Form to a centre within ten working days of the external verification visit to which it relates.
- Issue qualification and unit certificates to the centre within fifteen working days of receipt of completed Certificate Request Forms.
- Issue examination results within ten working days of an examination.
- Provide feedback on a results enquiry within fifteen working days of receiving a request.
- Acknowledge receipt of an appeal, report of suspected malpractice or complaint within ten working days of receipt, providing a proposed timescale for when the outcome of any investigation will be reported.

CONTACT DETAILS

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Fax: 0121 331 6883
Email: abbeenquiries@bcu.ac.uk

Website: www.abbega.co.uk

FEES

All ABBE fees can be found on the ABBE fees list, available on the website: www.abbega.co.uk.

ABBE DOCUMENTATION

A current version of all ABBE documentation for centres and candidates is available on the ABBE website, www.abbega.co.uk and in hard copy from the ABBE office on request.

USE OF LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH

All ABBE qualifications and assessment mechanisms are currently available in English only. Guidance on using languages other than English is provided in the ABBE Centre Operations Guide available on the ABBE website at www.abbega.co.uk.

COMPLAINTS

We aim to ensure that the service received from ABBE is satisfactory, however if a centre or candidate wishes to complain about any aspect of ABBE's service, this should be sent in writing to:

Chief Executive
ABBE
Birmingham City University
Franchise Street
Perry Barr
Birmingham B42 2SU



REQUEST FOR APPEAL

Where a centre or candidate wishes appeal against an assessment decision, an appeal can be made to ABBE. ABBE will review the matter taking into account the reasons for the appeal as included below. Please ensure that as much detail as possible is provided. Appeals must be made within fifteen working days of the decision that is being appealed against.

A fee is payable for this service (please see ABBE Fees List available on the website at www.abbeqa.co.uk or by calling 0121 331 5174). Requests from candidates must be accompanied by a cheque made payable to 'ABBE Limited'. Requests received from assessment centres will be invoiced.

Name of person making appeal:	
ABBE registration number (if applicable):	
Organisation name: (only to be completed if appeal is being made by an ABBE approved assessment centre)	
Address:	
Email address:	
Qualification title:	

TYPE OF APPEAL (please tick)

Candidate or centre appealing against an ABBE examination result	<input type="checkbox"/>	A results enquiry must be requested before an appeal can be received by ABBE. Please confirm date of results enquiry here:
Candidate appealing against an assessment/internal verifier decision made by their assessment centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Candidates must follow the appeals procedure within their assessment centre before submitting an appeal to ABBE. Please confirm that outcome of the centre appeals process is attached with this application <input type="checkbox"/>
Candidate or centre appealing against an ABBE external verifier decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Centre appealing against an evaluation decision for ABBE centre approval	<input type="checkbox"/>	

The ABBE appeals process is in two stages. At Stage 1 the appeal will be investigated by the ABBE Chief External Verifier or Examinations Officer as appropriate. If the appellant is not satisfied with the outcome at Stage 1, they can refer the case to Stage 2 where the appeal will be reviewed by the ABBE Appeals Panel.

Please indicate which stage this appeal is at:

Stage 1 appeal

Stage 2 appeal

REASON FOR APPEAL

(include all relevant information and attach separate documents as necessary)

NAME:

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

Please return to: ABBE, Birmingham City University, Franchise Street, Perry Barr, Birmingham, B42 2SU or via email to abbeenquiries@bcu.ac.uk.



APPLICATION FOR REPLACEMENT CERTIFICATE

Where certificate has been lost or stolen, the candidate or ABBE approved assessment centre may apply for a replacement. The candidate/centre must ensure that all possible measures have been taken to locate the original certificate before applying for a replacement and details of this action must be reported on this form.

A fee is payable for this service (please see ABBE Fees List available on the website at www.abbega.co.uk or by calling 0121 331 5174). Requests from candidates must be accompanied by a cheque made payable to 'ABBE Limited'. Requests received from assessment centres will be invoiced.

ASSESSMENT CENTRE: (where candidate was registered for the qualification)	
NAME OF CANDIDATE:	
CANDIDATE REGISTRATION NUMBER:	
CANDIDATE DATE OF BIRTH:	
CANDIDATE ADDRESS:	
QUALIFICATION TITLE:	
DATE OF ACHIEVEMENT OF QUALIFICATION:	

FULL DETAILS OF HOW THE ORIGINAL CERTIFICATE WAS LOST:

ACTION TAKEN TO INVESTIGATE THE LOSS AND RETRIEVE THE CERTIFICATE:

(please include as much detail as possible and note that ABBE will only be able to issue a replacement if all possible action has been taken to retrieve the original. This is to minimise the risk of someone using the original in error or fraudulently)

I confirm that all appropriate measures have been taken to locate the original certificate:

Signed:

Date:

Please return to: ABBE, Birmingham City University, Franchise Street, Perry Barr, Birmingham, B42 2SU or via email to abbeenquiries@bcu.ac.uk

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