



Natural Resources
Canada

Ressources naturelles
Canada

NRCan's Homes & Communities Division Candidate Exam Handbook

November 2020

ENERGGUIDE



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Aussi disponible en français sous le titre : *Division d'habitations et communautés de RNCa – Manuel du candidat à l'examen*

Summary of changes

| Section | Changes |
|---------------------|---|
| Throughout | Housing Division is now Homes & Communities Division |
| Reference Documents | Addition of List of competency profiles noting the current version. |
| 2.6 | Addition of ENERGY STAR for New Houses v17.1 GJ - Energy Advisor Requalification exam |

Reference documents

Natural Resources Canada’s Homes & Communities Division exams reference various documents depending on which exam is taken. The EnerGuide¹ Rating System version 15 exams and their respective competency profiles may reference the following documents:

| Title and description |
|---|
| <p><i>EnerGuide Rating System—Standard—Version 15.x</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defines the scope and technical requirements for rating the energy efficiency of new and existing houses under the EnerGuide Rating System |
| <p><i>EnerGuide Rating System—Administrative Procedures—Version 15.x</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defines key roles, responsibilities and required administrative procedures |
| <p><i>EnerGuide Rating System—Quality Assurance Procedures—Version 15.x</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defines the quality assurance audit process that validates overall service organization and energy advisor performance, effectiveness, and compliance with program procedures and guidelines |
| <p><i>EnerGuide Rating System—Technical Procedures—Version 15.x</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defines required on-site data collection and evaluation procedures and protocols |
| <p><i>EnerGuide Rating System—HOT2000 User Guide—Version 15.x</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defines procedures and protocols for the use of the HOT2000 energy modelling software in producing EnerGuide ratings and other outputs of the EnerGuide Rating System |
| <p><i>EnerGuide Rating System—File Submission User Guide—Version 15.x</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defines the process for submitting EnerGuide Rating System house files to Natural Resources Canada |
| <p><i>Maps of Climate Data</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defines climate data to be used for modelling purposes under the EnerGuide Rating System for all geographical locations in Canada |

The ENERGY STAR^{®2} for New Homes v17.x GJ Energy Advisor exam and competency profile references the following documents:

| Title |
|--|
| <i>ENERGY STAR[®] for New Homes—Standard—Version 17.x</i> |
| <i>ENERGY STAR[®] for New Homes—Technical Procedures—Version 17.x</i> |
| <i>ENERGY STAR[®] for New Homes—Administrative Procedures—Version 17.x</i> |
| <i>ENERGY STAR[®] for New Homes Tables for Calculating Thermal Resistance of Opaque Assemblies v17.x</i> |
| <i>ENERGY STAR for New Homes—EA Verification Checklist—Version 17.x</i> |
| <i>Guidelines for Reproducing, Applying and Using the ENERGY STAR[®] Name and Symbol for the ENERGY STAR for New Homes initiative</i> |
| <i>ENERGY STAR for New Homes Annual Builder Attestation</i> |
| <i>New Housing Programs’ 2012 Energy Credits, Effective: 28 February 2014</i> |

The documents noted in the tables above refer to the most current versions, which are maintained and available at the Natural Resources Canada online resource centre. For instructions on how to access the online resource centre, please see **section 9.3**.

¹ EnerGuide is an official mark of Natural Resources Canada

² The ENERGY STAR[®] mark is administered and promoted in Canada by Natural Resources Canada and used with permission.

| Competency Profile Name | Current Version |
|---|------------------------|
| Foundation Level Exam Competency Profile | Nov. 2015 |
| EnerGuide Rating System v15 - Service Organization Manager (SOM) Exam Competency Profile <i>(also applies to SOM Requalification Exam)</i> | Nov. 2020 |
| EnerGuide Rating System v15 - Energy Advisor (EA) Exam (House) Competency Profile <i>(also applies to EA (House) Requalification Exam)</i> | Nov. 2020 |
| EnerGuide Rating System v15 - Quality Assurance Specialist (QAS) Exam (House) Competency Profile <i>(also applies to QAS (House) Requalification Exam)</i> | Nov. 2020 |
| EnerGuide Rating System v15 - Energy Advisor Exam (MURB) and Quality Assurance Specialist Exam (MURB) Competency Profile <i>(also applies to Combo MURB Exam for QAS)</i> | Aug. 2020 |
| ENERGY STAR for New Houses v17 GJ - Energy Advisor Exam Competency Profile <i>(also applies ESNH v17 GJ EA Requalification Exam)</i> | Nov. 2020 |

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Introduction

Natural Resources Canada has contracted Yardstick Assessment Strategies, Inc. (YAS) to create a robust exam development process following industry best-practices to ensure that those who are registered to deliver the various Natural Resources Canada’s Homes & Communities Division services sufficiently master the necessary competencies (e.g. knowledge, abilities, skills, attitudes and judgment) to perform these services effectively.

The recommendation for more rigorous exams stemmed from a Policy Advisory Committee supported by three subcommittees and three working groups using an open and transparent approach. This process included balanced representation of expertise and interest groups, a decision-making process based on the principles of consensus and public review of the Committee’s recommendations in order to seek input from a broad range of stakeholders.

The exams and exam development process was guided by two sets of testing standards, including The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (2014) and the National Commission for Certifying Agencies Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs (2016). These standards are grounded in psychometric science and represent best practice in exam development and administration.

1 Exam development process

1.1 Natural Resources Canada’s Homes & Communities Division exams

Natural Resources Canada’s Homes & Communities Division currently has 11 exams available for taking. They are listed in **section 2.6** of this document, and found on the exam website here:

<https://nrcan.ysasecure.com/products>

If taking an EnerGuide Rating System v15 exam, see the latest version of the *EnerGuide Rating System v15.x - Administrative Procedures* for details on what exams are required for each designation.

If taking the ENERGY STAR for New Homes v17.x GJ - Energy Advisor exam, please consult the latest version of the *ENERGY STAR® for New Homes Standard* for details on what exams are required.

1.2 Development of competency profiles

For each of the exams, Natural Resources Canada worked with subject matter experts (SMEs) to develop detailed competency profiles. These competency profiles describe the skills, knowledge and abilities required for the position. The exam competency profiles are sub-divided into three parts: competency categories; competencies; and learning objectives. The competency profiles are used as the basis for the development of an exam and identify the topics that candidates will be tested on during the exam. The competency profiles for all of Natural Resources Canada’s Homes & Communities Division exams are maintained and available at the Natural Resources Canada online resource centre. For instructions on how to access the online resource centre, please see **section 9.3**.

1.3 Blueprint development

An exam blueprint outlining the content to be tested on each exam was developed by Natural Resources Canada and subject matter experts from industry with oversight from expert Psychometricians. The blueprint includes the competencies - that is, the content domain that forms the basis for test development. It also specifies variables that provide structure for the exam, as well as guidelines and specifications for weighting the competencies to ensure that the exam accurately reflects the requirements of the minimally-competent candidate.

1.4 Development of exam questions

Exam questions are developed by SMEs who are trained in question writing. The exam questions measure the specified competencies in accordance with the guidelines identified in the exam blueprint. After a question is developed, it is reviewed by Natural Resources Canada and then further evaluated and refined by the Standard Setting group.

1.5 Review of exam questions

Exam questions go through several stages of review by internal staff at Natural Resources Canada. They ensure that each question is fair, that it matches the relevant learning objective and that it is accurately referenced within relevant reference material.

1.6 Exam assembly and standard setting

The exams are assembled, ensuring a good cross section of questions from the various learning objectives, and adherence to the requirements of each specific exam blueprint.

The pass mark represents the performance expected of a minimally competent candidate. The pass mark for each exam is established by using the professionally accepted and widely used Modified Angoff method, whereby SMEs set the standard for each question based on its difficulty. For more information on the Modified Angoff method and standard setting, see **Appendix A: The Modified Angoff Method & Determining a Pass Mark**.

The examination is computer administered and scored on the basis of the total number of correct answers; one point is allotted for each correct answer. It is not adjusted to a “Bell” curve. Passing or failing the examination does not depend on the scores of the other candidates but on how well the candidate did on the questions administered in relation to the standard set.

1.7 Translation

Exams are translated by professional translators and further reviewed and validated by Natural Resources Canada staff to ensure the proper and consistent use of administrative and technical terminology.

1.8 Exam security and confidentiality

The exam content is the property of Natural Resources Canada and must remain secure at all times. The exam is administered in proctored test centres under strict protocols in order to ensure that security and confidentiality are maintained. Proctors are required to sign a statement of understanding as are all candidates taking the exam. The Candidate Statement of Understanding (**Appendix B: Candidate Statement of Understanding**) outlines the expectations surrounding the exam in terms of ensuring security of exam content and confidentiality of exam results.

2 Getting ready for the exams

2.1 Foundation Level exam

The Foundation Level exam assesses foundational competencies such as numeracy, low-rise housing construction and renovation, building envelope, heating, ventilation and air conditioning, building science principles and the house-as-a-system concept. As such, the competency profile for this exam is not based on any specific Natural Resources Canada reference material.

Although the competency profile for the Foundation Level exam includes competencies and learning objectives in the areas of communication and computer skills, these are not assessed during the exam. However, candidates are expected to be competent in these areas.

Natural Resources Canada has prepared a document entitled *Useful reference material when preparing for the NRCan Foundation Level Exam*. This document and the Foundation Level exam competency profile are available at the Natural Resources Canada online resource centre. For instructions on how to access the online resource centre, please see **section 9.3**.

Candidates are also encouraged to review and study applicable reference material published by any other reputable organization or author in preparation for this exam.

2.2 Program specific exams (EnerGuide Rating System or ENERGY STAR for New Homes)

The recommended approach to prepare for any qualification exam is to review and study the respective competency profiles. The competency profiles for all the Natural Resources Canada's Homes & Communities Division exams are available at the Natural Resources Canada online resource centre. For instructions on how to access the online resource centre, please see **section 9.3**.

These competency profiles reference the latest version of the Natural Resources Canada's Homes & Communities Division documentation. See **page iv** for the list of relevant reference documents.

The requalification exams are based on the same competency profile as the original exam, but note that the **ERS v15.x – Energy Advisor Requalification exam (House)** has approximately 20 of the 100 exam questions based on the Foundation Level Exam Competency Profile, while the remaining 80 questions are based on the Energy Advisor Exam (House) Competency Profile.

Likewise, the **ERS v15.x – Quality Assurance Specialist Requalification exam (House)** has those same 100 EA requalification questions on its exam, plus an additional 25 questions from the Quality Assurance Specialist Exam (house) Competency Profile.

2.3 EnerGuide Rating System v15 orientation modules

To assist stakeholders in transitioning to the updated EnerGuide Rating System as well as candidates in preparation for the qualification exams for the updated EnerGuide Rating System, Natural Resources Canada has developed orientation and technical modules. These modules introduce the key EnerGuide

Rating System v15 documents and outline some of the key changes to the rating system. The modules are maintained and available at the Natural Resources Canada online resource centre. For instructions on how to access the online resource centre, please see **section 9.3**.

2.4 Training

There is no requirement by Natural Resources Canada for candidates to have participated in training before taking the exams. However, candidates may access online or in-class training offered by their service organization or through training organizations, schools, colleges, industry associations or other reputable organizations or individuals. Natural Resources Canada does not endorse or recommend any specific trainers or training organizations.

2.5 Exam questions

Exam questions are multiple-choice. Multiple-choice questions are the most common form of assessment used for licensure and certification exams. The exam questions consist of the stem, which presents a question or a problem, and four alternatives or choices from which the candidate selects the correct or best option. Options are presented as words, statements or numbers. Shown here is an example of a multiple-choice question.

What is the square root of 625?

- A. 15
- B. 25
- C. 35
- D. 45

2.6 Number of exam questions and exam length

| Exam Name | No. of exam questions | Exam length |
|---|-----------------------|-------------|
| Foundation Level exam | 150 | 180 minutes |
| EnerGuide Rating System v15 - Service Organization Manager Exam | 75 | 90 minutes |
| EnerGuide Rating System v15 - Service Organization Manager Requalification Exam | 50 | 60 minutes |
| EnerGuide Rating System v15 - Energy Advisor Exam (House) | 150 | 180 minutes |
| EnerGuide Rating System v15 - Energy Advisor Exam (MURB) | 50 | 60 minutes |
| EnerGuide Rating System v15 - Energy Advisor Requalification Exam (House) | 100 | 120 minutes |
| EnerGuide Rating System v15 - Quality Assurance Specialist Exam (House) | 75 | 90 minutes |
| EnerGuide Rating System v15 - Quality Assurance Specialist Exam (MURB) | 40 | 50 minutes |
| EnerGuide Rating System v15 – Combo MURB exam for Quality Assurance Specialists | 90 | 110 minutes |
| EnerGuide Rating System v15 - Quality Assurance Specialist Requalification Exam (House) | 125 | 150 minutes |
| ENERGY STAR for New Houses v17 GJ - Energy Advisor exam | 75 | 90 minutes |
| ENERGY STAR for New Houses v17 GJ - Energy Advisor Requalification exam | 50 | 60 minutes |

2.7 Tutorial Quiz and Sample Questions Quiz

To assist in preparation for the exams, the exam website has a Tutorial Quiz, and a Sample Questions Quiz. Both of these quizzes can only be taken after registering at <https://nrca.nrcan.gc.ca/secure>. See **section 3** for more details on registering for exams.

The Tutorial Quiz has 9 multiple choice questions that help a candidate become familiar with the exam format and interface. The Tutorial Quiz does **not** have a time limit, and it can be taken numerous times.

The Sample Questions Quiz includes 25 multiple choice questions that are representative of the Foundation Level exam and the EnerGuide Rating System exams. These questions have been compiled into a Sample Questions Quiz in order to show the range of difficulty of the questions, and to highlight the importance of studying the competency profiles and EnerGuide Rating System documentation. After taking the Sample Question Quiz, the candidate will see the correct answer, plus the reference and rationale that supports it. The Sample Questions Quiz does have a 30 minute time limit to simulate a real exam however, it too can be taken numerous times. Candidates should not take the Sample Questions Quiz at the testing centre while they are there to take an exam, as it could use up some of your examination time.

3 Registering for an exam

3.1 Standard registration process

STEP 1 – Account Creation

- The Natural Resources Canada’s Homes & Communities Division exams are hosted by Yardstick Software Inc. (Yardstick) at <https://nrca.yasasecure.com>. Click on this link and “Create A New Account” if you do not already have one. Once you create your account, you can log in at any time with your username and password.

STEP 2 – Exam Purchase

- Select the ‘products’ option at the top to review the available examinations for purchase.
- Once the examination is chosen, simply follow the purchase steps provided on the platform (NOTE – only major credit cards are approved. No other form of payment is accepted). You need to pay for the exam before you can select your preferred location and time.

STEP 3 – Booking Request Submission

- Once the purchase is complete, simply click on ‘my exams’.
- You will then see the word ‘book’ next to the examination in question. Select that button.
- You will then be directed to select a region (city) in which you wish to write and you will be provided with options within that region.
- Select the location as well as three date/time combinations for your examination request and submit. (NOTE – you will not be able to choose any date sooner than five business days from the day you are entering this request as the testing site needs time to coordinate this request).
- At this point the request will be reviewed by Yardstick and coordinated with the testing site. Once the date/time combination has been confirmed, you will receive a final booking confirmation email with the details on the date, time, location and examination particulars.
- Please Note, Yardstick aims for confirming a time slot within 5 business days, but occasionally the response time can take up to 10 days when testing centres are very busy.

NOTE: The “Account Creation” step, “Exam Purchase” step and “Booking Request Submission” step can be done at different times. You do not have to request exam dates at the same time that you purchase an exam. This can be done later, once you have a better idea of your schedule. However, remember that at least 5 business days advance time is required. See **section 4.5** for conditions on exam rescheduling.

3.2 Eligibility requirements

Candidates are eligible to take an exam once they complete the online registration and pay the exam fee.

Candidates who falsify any documentation will not be allowed to write the exam. If falsification is discovered after the exam has been taken, the exam results will be null and void. No reimbursement of exam fees will be provided.

3.3 Special accommodation

3.3.1 Formal request

Natural Resources Canada can provide reasonable test accommodations to individuals who have documented disabilities (physical, mental or learning impairments) within the definition provided by the Human Rights Code. Accommodation requests are assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure equal opportunity for individuals to fully demonstrate their qualifications without altering the nature or level of the qualification being assessed. We consider each case after carefully reviewing the submitted documentation; however, submitting a request does not guarantee receiving accommodation. Accommodations are provided to ensure that all individuals are treated fairly on all evaluations.

To request a special accommodation, candidates should submit a written request to Natural Resources Canada for consideration before registering for an exam. The booking confirmation for these requests may take upwards of 30 days to review as each request is completed on an individual basis. Requests for accommodation received fewer than 30 days before a booked exam will not be considered, except in unusual circumstances, such as a recent injury.

The requests are to be sent to: nrcan.ers_exams-examens_sce.nrcan@canada.ca and must include:

- the specific exam for which accommodation is requested;
- the request for accommodation rationale;
- supporting documentation (such as educational assessment or doctor's letter) that identifies the disability and explains the effect of the disability on the candidate's ability to perform under normal testing conditions;
- The educational assessment or doctor's letter must include the licensed/qualified professional's contact information and credentials;
- preferred exam site; and
- candidate contact information.

Special accommodation includes any medication you need to bring into the examination room.

3.3.2 Additional charges

Any additional charges for special accommodations are to be paid by the candidate, and are in addition to the regular exam fee. Not all special accommodation requests will require additional funds (such as snacks for a diabetic, etc.). Additional charges are set at the discretion of the exam administrator, and are payable to Yardstick prior to the day of the exam, by credit card only.

3.3.3 Process

1. Candidate opens the exam site, creates/signs onto account, and views available testing sites.
2. Candidate sends an email to Natural Resources Canada detailing the special accommodation request with supporting documentation (see above).

3. Once Natural Resources Canada arrives at a decision on the request, the candidate is informed and the decision is copied to the exam administrator.
4. If approved, the candidate goes to the exam booking website, purchases the exam product and submits the booking request with three date / time combinations.
5. The exam administrator investigates the special accommodation request, finds the correct location to assist the candidate with the approved request and completes the booking process for the candidate.
6. Candidate is emailed the confirmation email with exam details, etc.

3.4 Exam fees

The current cost of each Natural Resources Canada Homes & Communities Division exam can be found on the Products tab of the exam website, found here: <https://nrcan.ysasecure.com/products>. Please note that exam prices increase by 1.5% on September 1st of every year.

3.5 Payment methods

Payment must be made online using VISA, MasterCard or American Express.

3.6 Testing centres

The exam testing centres are located across Canada. The full listing, by province and territory, can be found on Yardstick's online exam registration website. Yardstick is continuously adding new testing locations. If you do not see a location that is within a reasonable distance from your town/city of residence, you may contact Yardstick directly and ask for the addition of a test site closer to you.

3.7 Official languages

When registering for an examination, applicants can choose their language preference at the bottom of the "Register" page. A candidate can also choose a French or English speaking proctor depending on their language preference by using the appropriate check box on the registration page. Each exam is available in both official languages. A candidate will be able to toggle back and forth between French and English when viewing questions during the exam.

3.8 Disclosure of personal information

Only Natural Resources Canada will have access to the candidate's personal information and exam results, and will not disclose it to any individual or organization.

4 After registration

4.1 Email acknowledgement

Once a candidate has registered for an exam by submitting a booking request (with their preferred location/date/time combinations), a confirmation email listing the final confirmed date, time, and location of the exam will be emailed to the candidate. The email will also contain instructions on what to bring on exam day to the test centre.

The confirmation e-mail can be expected within 5 business days of the candidate’s booking request. In the event Yardstick is unable to confirm one of the three options, a representative will contact the candidate to identify additional options.

Should the candidate require immediate support from Yardstick regarding the exam at any time between registering and the exam date, they can call Yardstick Emergency Support at **1-888-881-1005**. Please note, Yardstick staff will pick up between 6:30am and 5:00pm MST (Mountain Standard Time) – Monday through Friday. Outside those hours, a message can be left on the answering service. A Yardstick representative will respond at their earliest convenience.

4.2 Name change and address change

In the event that changes are required to the candidate’s personal information (candidate name, address, etc.) the candidate may do so online in their profile.

4.3 Exam site change

In the event of an unexpected exam site change, affected candidates will be contacted by email and telephone in order to confirm the new location. Please provide an emergency contact number when registering in case Yardstick needs to inform you of a last minute change.

4.4 Exam cancellation by candidate

The following table explains if the exam registration fee is refunded or not, depending on the time frame of the cancellation request:

| Time frame | Resulting Action |
|---|------------------------------|
| Up until fifteen (15) business days prior to exam. | Exam fee fully refundable. |
| Fifteen (15) business days prior to exam until two (2) business days prior to exam. | 50% of exam fee is refunded. |
| Two (2) business days prior to exam until exam day. | No Refund. |

4.5 Exam rescheduling request by candidate

Should the candidate want to change the exam date, time or location, they need to send a rescheduling request to testingsupport@getyardstick.com. The new requested exam date must be at least five (5) business days in the future. A re-booking fee may apply, depending on when and how often the request is made. See table below for details.

| Time frame | Resulting Action |
|---|--|
| Up until five (5) business days prior to scheduled exam. | The candidate can re-book at no additional charge, up to 3 times. After 3 requests, they are charged an additional 50% of the exam fee per rescheduling request. |
| Five (5) business days prior to exam until two (2) business days prior to exam. | The candidate is charged an additional 50% of the exam fee. |
| Two (2) business days prior to exam until exam day. | The candidate forfeits the exam registration fee, re-purchases a new exam at full cost, and rebooks. |

4.6 Failure to take the exam

No refund will be provided to a candidate who does not take the exam at the scheduled date and time unless the failure to take the exam is due to:

1. Death in the family (immediate);
2. Sudden illness or injury (incapacitating); or
3. Other circumstances deemed to be commensurate with (1) or (2).

In these situations, candidates have 10 business days from the date of the exam to submit a refund request email to testingsupport@getyardstick.com along with supporting documentation outlining the circumstances that prevented them from taking the exam on the scheduled exam day. If the refund request is approved, 50% of the purchase price may be refunded.

5 Candidate’s Statement of Understanding

5.1 Conduct and tolerance

Conduct occurring before, during or after testing that violates principles detailed in the Candidate Statement of Understanding may result in invalidation of exam results and/or other penalties and will be reported to Natural Resources Canada.

On the day of the exam, each candidate will receive an electronic copy of the Candidate Statement of Understanding. Candidates will not be able to begin the exam without reading and agreeing to the statement. This document is available in **Appendix B: Candidate Statement of Understanding**.

6 On exam day

6.1 Admission to the exam

To allow the proctor to validate the candidate's identity, candidates are required to bring a copy of the exam scheduling confirmation email and government issued photo identification (e.g., passport, driver's license) to the test centre. Candidates without proper identification will not be allowed to take the exam. Candidates will be asked to review their personal information on the roster to ensure the accuracy of the information. The name on the photo ID must be identical to the name used during on-line registration.

The proctor will provide information to all candidates regarding the test centre and exam protocol including the storage of cell phones and mobile devices, paper material, books, bags, etc.

6.2 Before the start of the exam

It is recommended that the candidate arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled exam start time for registration and orientation, as the exam will start at the scheduled time. Proctors will log each candidate into the exam at the designated time. Before the exam begins candidates will be required to read and agree to the Candidate Statement of Understanding. This document is in **Appendix B: Candidate Statement of Understanding**.

Candidates who arrive between the scheduled start time and 30 minutes after the scheduled start time will be allowed to take the exam. However, the exam clock will start at the scheduled exam time, and the candidates will have lost the amount of time that they were late.

Candidates who arrive more than 30 minutes after the scheduled start time will not be permitted to take the exam.

Candidates will be required to turn their pockets inside out to confirm to the satisfaction of the Proctor that they are not bringing in to the exam room any object that is not permitted. Proctors may ask to inspect the candidates' glasses, watch, buttons, etc.

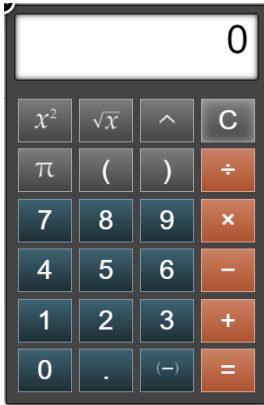
6.3 Tutorial Quiz

A 'Tutorial Quiz' is available on the exam website for candidates to become familiar with the exam interface. Candidates can take this tutorial any time prior to exam day, as well as immediately prior to taking the actual exam. The time spent on the tutorial quiz does not count towards the allotted exam time.

6.4 Material permitted to be used during exam

Features included in all online exams:

- A bookmark feature to bookmark questions to come back to.
- A notepad feature to make notes about that question. Please note that anything entered there can be viewed by Natural Resources Canada after the exam is submitted.
- An on-line calculator that has the following functions: addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, equals, brackets, Pi, square root, squared, exponent, clear, decimal, negative and the numbers 0 to 9. This is what the calculator looks like:



Items supplied for the exam:

- Scrap paper and a pencil will be provided by the Exam Proctor at the beginning of each exam and must be turned in at the end of the exam.

Possibly permissible items to bring in:

- A basic calculator that has no more functions than the online model. Note, that it will be examined and approved/rejected by the Proctor on duty.
- A water in a clear spill-proof container may be approved by the Proctor on duty.

6.5 Washroom breaks

Candidates are permitted at least one washroom break during their exam, but maybe more depending on the length of the exam. Candidates who are taking a 50 or 60 minute exam are allowed one washroom break. Candidates who are taking a 90, 110 or 120 minute exam are allowed up to two washroom breaks. Candidates who are taking a 150 or 180 minute exam are allowed up to three washroom breaks.

Please note, that the exam timer will not be paused during the washroom break and therefore no additional time will be provided to complete the exam. Candidates must also notify the exam proctor prior to taking the washroom break, who will note the amount of time that the candidate is away from the room, by having the candidate sign in and out.

6.6 At the end of the exam

At the end of the exam candidates will receive a confirmation that their exam responses have been captured and their exam successfully submitted.

6.7 Online feedback survey

Candidates will be asked to complete a short online feedback survey before the results of their exam will be made available. Responses to the survey contribute to the on-going improvement of Natural Resources Canada's Homes & Communities Division exam delivery system. All candidates are encouraged to fill out the survey.

7 Exam results

7.1 Your exam result

Once the feedback survey is completed, the candidate will be emailed the result of their exam to the address the candidate provided at the time of registration. The email will state the name of the exam, and whether the candidate “Passed” or “Did Not Pass” and a brief exam performance analysis. See section 7.2

All Homes & Communities Division exams are scored automatically by the testing software using a pre-determined answer key for that exam form. Consequently, due to the sophistication of the computer-based scoring and extensive quality control procedures, it is very unlikely that there will be an error in the exam result.

Natural Resources Canada does not provide the questions or answers to current or previous exams, in order to uphold the integrity of the examination system. Circulation of exam questions and answers would impede the fair assessment process which is one of the goals of the new system.

Natural Resources Canada does not release the passing mark for each exam or the mark achieved by candidates. It is industry standard practice to inform the candidates that they were successful or not successful. The purpose of Natural Resources Canada’s Homes & Communities Division exams is to determine whether a candidate has the necessary competencies (e.g. knowledge, abilities, skills, attitudes and judgement) to perform the services effectively. The pass mark has been set at a minimum (adequate) level of competency for each of the respective exams. Natural Resources Canada does not grade on a bell curve or rank-order candidates. (Please refer to **Appendix A: The Modified Angoff Method & Determining a Pass Mark** for information on setting pass marks.)

7.2 Performance report

In addition to the exam result, all candidates will receive a list of learning objectives that correspond to questions they did not answer correctly on that exam.

7.3 Sharing of the exam results

Natural Resources Canada will not share candidates’ exam results with other parties, including stakeholders and service organizations. Candidates can do so at their own discretion. Natural Resources Canada will use the exam results for administration purposes, such as for validation and tracking of registrations under their programs. For your information, the list of service organizations across the country can be found here: <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/energy/efficiency/housing/service-providers/15807>

8 Rewriting an exam

8.1 Applying to rewrite an exam

Candidates that do not pass an exam will need to re-register via the Yardstick online site in order to rewrite an exam. Candidates will have an unlimited number of attempts to rewrite an exam to achieve the pass mark.

8.2 Waiting period before rewriting an exam

Candidates that did not pass an exam must wait a minimum of 15 calendar days before they can rewrite the same exam.

9 Contact information

9.1 Yardstick testing support

For immediate urgent support from Yardstick, the candidate can call 1-888-881-1005, or email testingsupport@getyardstick.com.

9.2 Natural Resources Canada’s testing group email

For more information regarding Natural Resources Canada’s Homes & Communities Division exams or for clarification on the instructions in this *Candidate Exam Handbook*, please contact Natural Resources Canada by email at nrcan.ers_exams-examens_sce.nrcan@canada.ca.

9.3 Natural Resources Canada’s Homes & Communities Division documentation access

Current energy advisors can access the latest Natural Resources Canada’s Homes & Communities Division documentation, orientation webinars and competency profiles by following these steps:

1. Sign in to the **Members Only Resource Centre** at <https://www2.nrcan-rncan.gc.ca/oe/nh-mn/rc-cd/index.cfm?fuseaction=s.slf&lang=eng>.
2. Click on **EnerGuide Rating System** or **ENERGY STAR for New Homes** on the left-hand side.
3. Click on the respective **Administrative, Training and Technical Materials** link to view the documentation.

New candidates looking to become energy advisors, quality assurance specialists or service organization managers for the Homes & Communities Division programs will want to review the latest [Homes & Communities Division exams reference material](#). ENERGY STAR for New Homes energy advisor candidates will also want to review the [ENERGY STAR related materials](#).

In addition, the following Natural Resources Canada webpage provides information on becoming an energy advisor: <https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/energy-efficiency/energy-efficiency-homes/professional-opportunities/how-become-nrcan-registered-energy-advisor/20566>

Appendix A: The Modified Angoff Method & Determining a Pass Mark

Standard Setting is the business of setting passing scores, (or what is referred to as 'cut scores'), for exams. The cut score(s) serves to classify candidates into categories; those who score above the cut score are judged to possess the minimum level of proficiency required for inclusion into the category, while those who score below the cut score are deemed not to possess the minimum level of proficiency required, and are classified accordingly.

Standard Setting is most often a judgmental process. It typically involves a panel of subject matter experts and stakeholders who must estimate the difficulty of each question for so-called minimally-competent, or borderline candidates. Those judgments are then aggregated in order to arrive at a passing score across sets of questions. Standard setting methods differ in the way that those judgments are made by the SMEs, and also in the way that question-level judgments are aggregated to create a passing score. One of the most common methods of standard setting is the Modified Angoff method.

The central task of the Modified Angoff method is for SMEs to estimate the percentage of minimally competent candidates who would answer each question correctly. The instructions to panelists would be to examine the question carefully, both in terms of the 'structure' of the question, and of the difficulty of the competency being tested. This information is used to make a judgment regarding the expected performance on that question of the minimally competent candidate. Two types of judgments are common, either the probability that any single candidate would answer the question correctly, or the number out of 100 minimally competent candidates that would answer the question correctly.

These judgments are summed for each SME to create a recommendation for a passing score. This makes sense because the question-level judgments are themselves pass-level judgments per question. For example, if a SME provided judgments of 0.7, or 70% for each and every question, the passing standard would logically be 70% for the entire exam.

| Item | Angoff Participant 1 round 1 | Angoff Participant 1 round 2 |
|------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | 0.87 | 0.79 |
| 2 | 0.64 | 0.60 |
| 3 | 0.43 | 0.47 |
| 4 | 0.55 | 0.51 |
| 5 | 0.61 | 0.63 |
| 6 | 0.43 | 0.44 |
| 7 | 0.76 | 0.79 |
| 8 | 0.61 | 0.66 |

Typically these judgments are made over multiple rounds after which the judgments become increasingly refined. Between rounds, various types of information can be provided to the SMEs regarding the reasonableness of their judgments. A common type of information is impact data, or the number and percentages of candidates who would pass based upon the average or median passing score recommendation by panelists. Other types of feedback include the difficulty of each question for the

candidates or the consistency of each of the SMEs' judgements.

As shown in the figure below, the changes in question-level ratings impact the overall recommended passing score. The passing score recommendation made in the final round is the one that is ultimately adopted.

Round One: Initial Ratings



Round Two: "Impact" data is presented.



For more detailed information on standard setting procedures and methods, refer to the book, *Setting Performance Standards: Concepts, Methods, and Perspectives*, edited by Gregory Cizek and Robert Sternberg.

Appendix B: Candidate Statement of Understanding

Conduct occurring before, during or after testing that violates these principles may result in invalidation of exam results and/or other penalties and will be reported to Natural Resources Canada.

I have read, understand and agree to abide by the above statement.

1. The Natural Resources Canada’s Homes & Communities Division exams are highly confidential. **The exam questions are the property of Natural Resources Canada.** Unauthorized disclosure of the exam questions is prohibited under copyright laws. **By acknowledging this statement of understanding, you agree to maintain the confidentiality of the exam questions.** You must therefore:
 - Keep the exam content confidential, even after the exam. This also includes not discussing the content with anyone who wrote the exam before you, with you or who has not written the exam yet.
 - Not use, or be in possession of any electronic device (such as cell phones, cameras, pagers, iPods, etc.) in the exam room;
 - Realize that any recording or memorization of exam questions is strictly forbidden whether you intend to recreate parts of the exam for financial gain or not.
2. Candidates may be observed at all times while they are taking an exam. This observation will include direct observation by invigilators. Invigilators may not necessarily inform you of their observations, but they are required to report behaviour that may violate the terms and regulations of Natural Resources Canada or other forms of irregular behaviour.
3. Any cheating and/or breach of confidentiality/security or any attempt to subvert the exam process by any candidate violates the purpose and principles of the exam. Any candidate who carries out or takes part in such activity can be sanctioned as per statement #4. Any candidate who witnesses such behaviour must report it to the Invigilator and/or Natural Resources Canada as soon as possible.
4. Yardstick Software Inc. strives to report results that accurately reflect the skill and performance of each candidate and represent a valid measure of their knowledge or competence as sampled by the exam. Accordingly, our standards and procedures for administering exams have two related goals: giving candidates comparable opportunities to demonstrate their abilities, and preventing any of them from gaining an unfair advantage over others. To promote these objectives, Natural Resources Canada reserves the right to cancel or withhold any exam results when, in the sole opinion of Natural Resources Canada, a testing irregularity occurs; cheating has occurred; there is an apparent discrepancy in, or falsification of, a candidate’s identification; a candidate engages in misconduct or plagiarism; when aberrancies in performance are detected for which there is no reasonable and satisfactory explanation; or the results are believed to be invalid for any other reason.

A candidate agrees to abide by all regulations, as well as oral and written instructions controlling the conduct of the exam. These regulations are intended to preserve the integrity of the exam process by providing standard test administration conditions that yield valid and reliable results.