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MAKING THE UK MORE SUSTAINABLE

BREEAM UK New Construction: Commercial Version 7.1 Technical Standard Summary

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Introduction to BREEAM UK New Construction: Commercial Version 7.1

BREEAM UK New Construction: Commercial Version 7.1 focuses on the sustainability performance of ground-up development commercial real estate projects from early planning through completion. Guided by BREEAM's holistic approach, the framework evaluates every aspect of a project — from design and construction methods to intended use, long-term resilience, and value creation.

It also considers the project's impact on the surrounding natural and built environment, promoting responsible development that advances sustainability, supports positive social outcomes, and aligns with long-term financial goals.

In some countries, BREEAM standards have been adapted to local conditions, translated into the local language, and aligned with the country's building regulations. UK New Construction: Commercial is an adaptation specifically for projects in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. International New Construction will apply in all other countries except where a local adaptation has been created.

Other countries with New Construction adaptations: Netherlands, Spain, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden and Norway. Find out more at www.breeam.com.

Certification offered

Design Stage Certification

BREEAM's Design Stage certification evaluates an asset's sustainable design intent and commitment before construction begins, offering a transparent and credible framework for integrating sustainability from the outset.

This stage enables key performance factors — such as building efficiency, materials selection, health and well-being, and decarbonisation — to be embedded into the building's design and construction plan.

By addressing these considerations early, the Design Stage certification sets a blueprint for success, minimising the need for costly changes or upgrades during the building's lifecycle. This proactive approach drives decisions that not only support long-term operational benefits but provide transparency and create lasting value, encouraging the full integration of sustainability principles into the asset's lifecycle from the start.

Post Construction Stage Certification

BREEAM's Post Construction certification verifies an asset's final rating based on its as-built performance after construction is complete, providing critical transparency into how well the asset is expected to function under real-world conditions.

This assessment verifies the extent to which the building was designed and built to deliver sustainability performance during its operations. The result reflects the actual performance of the asset, offering a clear view of its performance outcomes.

Post Construction certification provides asset owners a competitive advantage by validating sustainability performance claims, gaining recognition from global reporting frameworks, unlocking sustainable finance, and enhancing value.

Note that while Post Construction Stage certification is possible without a prior Design Stage certification, projects are encouraged to do both to streamline the certification process.

Ratings

BREEAM International New Construction Commercial V7.1 offers five ratings:

Rating	Star Rating	Overall Score
Outstanding	★★★★★	≥ 85%
Excellent	★★★★☆	≥ 70%
Very Good	★★★☆☆	≥ 55%
Good	★★☆☆☆	≥ 40%
Pass	★☆☆☆☆	≥ 25%

Each BREEAM rating broadly represents performance equivalent to:

- **Outstanding:** Less than the top 1% of buildings (innovator)
- **Excellent**: Top 10% of buildings (best practice)
- **Very Good**: Top 25% of buildings (advanced good practice)
- **Good**: Top 50% of buildings (intermediate good practice)
- **Pass**: Top 75% of buildings (standard good practice)

Minimum standards

BREEAM sets minimum standards of performance in key areas to ensure that performance against fundamental sustainability issues is not overlooked in pursuit of a particular rating. The minimum overall percentage score must be achieved and the minimum standards to achieve a particular BREEAM rating.

	Pass ★	Good ★★	Very Good ★★★	Excellent ★★★★	Outstanding ★★★★★
Management	- National health and safety legislation is met (Man 03)**		- Commissioning of building systems schedule and responsibilities (Man 04) - Technical and non-technical building user guide written and handed over (Man 04)**	- Basic responsible construction practices (Man 03) - Commitment to 12 month in-use commissioning (Man 05)**	- Advanced responsible construction practices (Man 03)
Health & Wellbeing	- No asbestos used (Hea 04)** - Legionella management in place (Hea 11)**		- Indoor air quality plan in place (Hea 04)** - Smoking ban (Hea 04)**		- Relevant areas achieve good daylight levels (Hea 01) - Homes are inclusive, accessible and have outdoor space (Hea 07, Hea 09, Resi only)

** Requirement is applicable to this rating and above.

Minimum standards (continued)

	Pass ★	Good ★★	Very Good ★★★	Excellent ★★★★	Outstanding ★★★★★
Energy			- Monitoring for 90% energy consumption by end use (Ene 03)**	- Significant improvement over energy regulations – 4 credits achieved (Ene 01) OR operational energy performance score achieving 3 credits (Ene 02)	- Best practice improvement over energy regulations – 6 credits achieved (Ene 01) AND Predictive energy modelling (Ene 02) OR operational energy performance score achieving 5 credits (Ene 02) - No fossil fuels combusted on-site (Ene 02)
Water		- Predicted water usage 15% improvement over baseline (Wat 01)** - Water meter is installed (Wat 02)**			- 30% improvement over baseline (Wat 01)
Materials	Legally harvested and traded timber (Mat 03)**			- Any project stage LCA and embodied carbon reporting – Criteria 1 to 6 (Mat 01)	- All project stage LCA and embodied carbon reporting – 5 credits (Mat 01)

** Requirement is applicable to this rating and above.

Minimum standards (continued)

	Pass ★	Good ★★	Very Good ★★★	Excellent ★★★★	Outstanding ★★★★★
Waste				- Recycling facilities provided (Wet, 03a and 03b)**	- Pre-demolition audit OR resource management plan (Wst 01)
Pollution					- No refrigerant use OR refrigerant have an emissions rate <1000 kgCO2e per KW (Pol 01)**

** Requirement is applicable to this rating and above.

Shell Only assessments

Shell Only assessments cannot achieve BREEAM Outstanding. This is because Shell Only is capped at Excellent for Ene 01 Energy and carbon performance for regulated energy uses.

Shell Only can achieve Excellent for Ene 01 Energy and carbon performance for regulated energy uses via an alternative route by achieving two credits for fabric performance optimisation (Ene 04, criterion 8).

Category weightings

BREEAM categories are weighted to reflect their varying importance in a project's overall sustainability, ensuring that critical sustainability issues like energy efficiency and occupant well-being have a greater influence on the final rating.

The weightings are assigned to reflect the current priorities and the relative significance of different sustainability issues, such as energy, carbon, materials, and health. Different weightings can be applied depending on the specific scope of the assessment.

By giving greater importance to key categories, the weighted scores encourage focus on high-priority areas to achieve a better BREEAM rating and ultimately, a more sustainable asset.

How it works

Follow these five steps to get your project certified:

1. **Create an account in the BREEAM Platform**
   The owner or developer creates a user account on the BREEAM Platform by visiting https://platform.breeam.com.

2. **Complete the pre-assessment to receive an unverified score**
   The pre-assessment provides a preliminary evaluation of the project's design and construction plans to estimate its potential environmental performance and forecast the BREEAM rating that could potentially be achieved.

3. **Find a licensed Assessor to register the project and verify the performance**
   The Assessor, trained and licensed by BRE, will guide you through the entire assessment process. They should be engaged as early as possible to maximise the potential for achieving the desired score and rating. Project teams will gather evidence and document how the project meets the BREEAM criteria, submitted directly to the Assessor. The Assessor will verify compliance and award the credits, score, and rating.

4. **Submit the assessment for quality assurance**
   The Assessor submits their assessment report and supporting documentation to BRE for quality assurance. Only once it passes this process is the certificate issued. Certification is dependent on the quality of the Assessor's submission.

5. **Receive certification**
   Once the assessment has passed the quality assurance process, the certificate is issued and added to the publicly available global database of certifications.

   Advisory Professionals (APs) can support client teams in decision-making and evidence preparation, unlocking the value of certification for current and future asset owners and users. While not required for certification, APs can facilitate performance optimisation, maximising value and cost-effective outcomes through BREEAM.

Standard asset types

Office	- Standard office - Financial office - Veterinary office
Industrial	- Logistics - Manufacturing - Self-storage - Vehicle servicing - Film or TV studios

Retail	- Bar, pub, drinking establishment (with food service) - Bar, pub, drinking establishment (without food service) - Café - Convenience store - Enclosed shopping mall - Fast food restaurant or takeaway - Restaurant - Open air shopping center - Retail services - Grocery shop or grocery store - Specialty store (non-food) - Showroom - Supermarket - Wholesale club or supercenter

Hospitality	- Hotel – luxury (STR) - Hotel – upper upscale (STR) - Hotel – upscale (STR) - Hotel – upper midscale (STR) - Hotel – midscale (STR) - Hotel – economy (STR) - Serviced apartment – luxury (STR) - Serviced apartment – upper upscale (STR) - Serviced apartment – upscale (STR) - Serviced apartment – upper midscale (STR) - Serviced apartment – midscale (STR) - Serviced apartment – economy (STR) - Hostel - Guest house

Standard asset types (continued)

Commercial

Healthcare	- Primary healthcare surgery - Health center or clinic - Hospital – Acute and maternity hospital - Hospital – Community and mental health hospital - Hospital – Long stay hospital - Hospital – Teaching and specialist hospital
Commercial laboratory	- Type 2 or 3
Government services	- Fire station - Holding center - Law court - Police station - Town hall

Education	- Preschool - Primary school - Secondary school - K-12 school - Non-acute special education needs / disability school - Further education institution - Higher education institution
Community	- Coast guard station or mountain rescue station - Community hub, community center, day center - Crematorium - Library - Mortuary - Place of worship - Visitor center

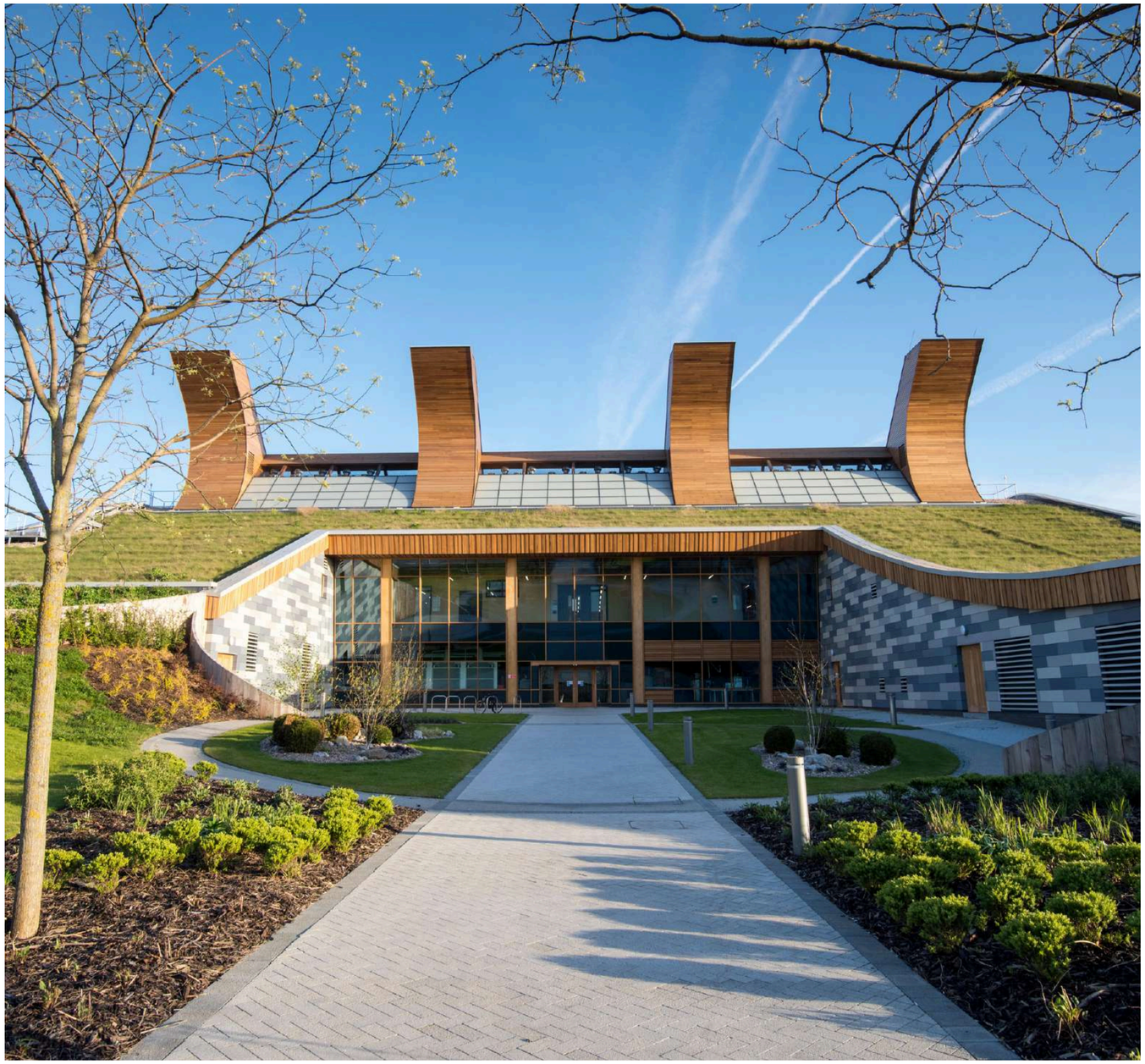
Culture and entertainment	- Cinema or movie theatre - Exhibition or conference hall - Museum or art gallery - Performing arts theatre or music hall or concert hall
Sports and leisure	- Fitness center or gym - Ice rink - Indoor area - Leisure center or recreation center with pool - Leisure center or recreation center without pool - Stadium – closed roof - Swimming pool – indoor - Swimming pool - outdoor
Transport hub	- Rail station (above ground) - Airport terminal - Coach or bus station - Maritime passenger terminal - Tram station

BREEAM Bespoke

The Bespoke process for BREEAM buildings allows those that are not considered to be standard to be assessed and certified against BREEAM.

In the Bespoke process, BREEAM criteria are selected and amended for that specific project. Amendments and additions to the standard criteria reflect the unique use and sustainability opportunities of the project and the location. Although the Bespoke process involves amending criteria for individual developments, it still adheres to a set of standards in terms of BREEAM structure, credit method and content which ensures the credibility of BREEAM is maintained. Fundamentals of the Bespoke method:

- Assessment criteria from the related BREEAM program will form part of the criteria set.
- Assessment criteria applicable to the development's function and location will form part of the criteria set.
- Where necessary, these criteria will be tailored to the development's function and location.
- Local codes and standards will be incorporated.



Categories and their topics

	Topic
Management	- Integrated design process that optimises building performance resulting from robust stakeholder engagement - Life cycle costing and service planning to deliver economic sustainability - Considerate, responsible and accountable construction site management practices - Commissioning and handover - Post-handover aftercare including post-occupancy evaluation and zero carbon transition planning
Health & Wellbeing	- Natural light to support visual performance, comfort and well-being - Appropriate design and controls of electric light - Circadian rhythm - Indoor air quality - Thermal comfort - Acoustic performance - Safe and accessible design, providing safe access to the asset and outdoor space/access to nature beyond private space - Private space (residential only) - Natural hazard risk management - Water quality

	Topic
Energy	- Energy and carbon performance of building envelope, services and fittings - Predicted operational energy and carbon performance - Energy use monitoring of systems and occupiers - Low carbon design measures including on-site or near-site low and zero carbon energy generation technologies - Energy efficient equipment selection and procurement - Energy efficient system selection and procurement - Flexible demand response - Installation of controls for HVAC systems
Transport	- Transport assessment and travel plan - Sustainable transport measures such as EV charging infrastructure, active travel support for cyclists, all supported by the outcome from the travel plan
Water	- Water efficiency of water-consuming fixtures and expected use of recycled water from approved blackwater, greywater and rainwater systems. - Water use monitoring of systems and occupiers - Water leak detection and prevention - Water efficient equipment and systems to ensure resilience to water stress - Predicted operational water consumption to ensure resilience to water stress

Categories and their topics (continued)

	Topic
Materials	- Building life cycle assessment with embodied carbon reporting requirements including MEP services. - Environmental product declarations for critical building components - Responsible sourcing of construction products - Durability and resilience - Material efficiency
Waste	- Construction waste management - Recycled aggregates - Operational waste planning - Speculative finishes - Adapting to climate change - Disassembly and adaptability

	Topic
Land Use & Ecology	- Site selection - Ecological risks and opportunities - Managing impacts on ecology - Ecological change and enhancement, specifically supporting Biodiversity Net Gain and wider site sustainability including reducing heat island effect. - Long term ecological management
Pollution	- Impact of refrigerants - Local air quality - Flood and surface water management - Reduction of nighttime light pollution - Reduction of noise pollution

Certification for multiple projects

Pre-approval programs are available for clients with multiple projects or assets seeking certification under any BREEAM New Construction standard. These offer cost-effective, streamlined pathways to certification while maintaining the rigor and credibility that BREEAM is known for globally.

New Construction for Residential assets in the UK

Formerly known as Home Quality Mark (HQM), BREEAM UK New Construction: Residential offers a trusted, science-based, holistic assessment of a home's sustainability, resilience, and quality, assuring homeowners, developers, and investors that properties meet top environmental and wellbeing standards and regulatory requirements through integrated sustainability. Find out more at www.breeam.com.

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Getting started

Talk to one of our experts to discover how BREEAM New Construction can help you leverage sustainability to unlock real estate value for your project or development pipeline.

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