



Guidance for preparing and submitting for Green Star Buildings

Version 1 | January 2026

Version Control

| Version | Date | Description |
|---------|------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 30/01/2026 | Initial release |

Use of trademarks

All third-party trademarks are the property of their respective owners. All third-party trademarks referenced in this document are used in an editorial fashion and not to the detriment of the trademark holders.

Intellectual Property Rights & Confidentiality

© Copyright New Zealand Green Building Council

No part of this document or the information contained within it may be (a) used for any purpose other than that stated within this document by the recipient (b) reproduced, transmitted or translated in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, manual, optical or otherwise, without prior written permission of New Zealand Green Building Council

Introduction

Purpose of this document

This guidance document outlines how to prepare best-practice Green Star Buildings submissions and submit for assessment.

For additional specific guidance, please also refer to the following resources on the NZGBC website:

- [What do best practice Green Star Submissions look like?](#)
- [Guidance for Submitting for Designed Assessments for Green Star Buildings](#)

How to use this guide

The table below provides a summary of the sections of this document.

Important:

Please note that specifics of how submissions work may change based on the development of the Green Star submission process. Where this is the case, the NZGBC will update this guidance document.

| Document section | Description |
|--|---|
| Introduction | Describes the purpose of the document and how to use it. |
| Preparing your Green Star Buildings submission | Outlines how to prepare a best practice credit submission, including guidance on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Credit submission structure• Submission Templates• Documentation and Supporting Evidence (i.e., file structure, naming etc) |
| Submitting for Assessment | Outlines how to submit for assessment, including guidance on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How to submit for different assessment types and assessment rounds• Assessment results |
| Appendices | Additional guidance to support project teams, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submission Resources• Submission Checklist |

Preparing your Green Star Buildings Submission

Preparing an effective submission is important as a best-practice submission allows project teams to more effectively communicate to Certified Assessor(s) how the project is complying and allows Certified Assessor(s) to more easily navigate and find information in the submission to verify and award compliance.

A Green Star submission is all about communication!



If you've got the technical elements right in the design and construction, the submission is about showing the assessors how you comply so that the credit can be awarded.

Always remember that while project teams and GSAPs have been working on a project for several years, the Assessors will be appreciating the building for the first time.

Credit submission structure

Each credit submission is comprised of three main components as follows.

Evidence



Submission Template

The Submission Template is the medium of communication between the project team and Certified Assessor(s).

Submission Templates are used to explain how the project has met the credit requirements in the credit, and how this is supported by the documents the project team have included in the submission.



Documentation

Credit claims and claims made in the Submission Template must be supported by documentation and evidence.

The Submission Guidelines provides recommended documentation for each credit.



Calculator

If the project is targeting a credit with a calculator (e.g., Life Cycle Impacts), the Green Star calculator must be completed if required by the credit criteria.

Submission Templates

Submission Templates allow project teams to communicate with the Certified Assessor(s) on how the project is complying with the credit and explain how the documentation provided illustrates this. As a result, using a submission template effectively will allow Certified Assessor(s) to more easily award the credit.

Find these under [Technical Resources](https://nzgbc.org.nz/green-star-buildings-nz) at nzgbc.org.nz/green-star-buildings-nz

Guidance on completing submission templates is provided below.

02 Responsible Construction

Responsible

Submission information

Provide the following information for the submission

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Submission type | Choose an item. |
| Performance level targeted | <input type="checkbox"/> Minimum Expectation <input type="checkbox"/> Credit Achievement |
| Points Targeted | Click or tap here to enter text. |

Technical Questions

There are project-specific technical questions for this credit and all responses received from the NZGBC are included in the submission. Choose an item.

Discussion

Narratives will help the Assessors understand how the project complies with the credit. Please include a narrative below, but note that simply listing the credit requirements is not helpful. Instead, outline any other issues that need to be considered by the Assessment Panel.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Changes between Rounds

If applicable, please use the text box below to explain any changes between Round 1 and Round 2. This is an opportunity for the GSAP to describe how they have addressed the Assessors comments in Round 2.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Submission Credit Information

Project teams to provide an overview of credit targets

This is where the points targeted, and compliance pathways are outlined. This affects how the assessors review your project.

Discussion box

The discussion box allows project teams to summarise how the credit is being targeted, and outline or highlight anything the project team might wish to clarify with the assessor.

- 
 - ✓ Do provide a summary of how the credit requirements have been targeted.
 - ✓ Do provide a narrative on how the credit intent/outcome is met by the project.
 - ✓ Do provide any additional context in the 'Discussion Box' to help the Certified Assessor(s) understand the project.
 - ✓ Do clearly communicate the location of evidence (i.e., reference document name and page numbers).
 - ✓ Do strike away points or sections not being targeted. i.e. via collapsing sections, and/or striking through, greying out or changing colour of text, where templates allow for it.
 - ✓ Do explain how the assessor comments have been addressed, if submitting for a Round 2 assessment.

- 
 - Don't skip fields in the submission form.
 - Don't make claims that are not supported by evidence.

Documentation and Supporting Evidence

File Naming Structure

Using a consistent and clear file naming structure is key to compiling a good submission.

Setting up good file naming conventions will assist Project Teams:

- ✓ Navigate the submission files for Project Teams
- ✓ Easily identify and check what credits have been compiled, and what documentation has been submitted
- ✓ Better quality assurance and version control of submitted documents

As guidance, the following file naming convention may be used as a template:

- **Credit Number** > **Credit Name/File Name** > **Assessment Type** > **Assessment Round**

For example:

- *Credit 1 Industry Development Designed Round 1.pdf* indicates that this credit submission is for a Designed Assessment at Round 1.

For additional examples, refer to below in the *File Structure* section.



Important:

Make sure to note the assessment round and assessment type in the name of the file. This will allow both project teams and assessors clearly see which files shall be assessed for each assessment

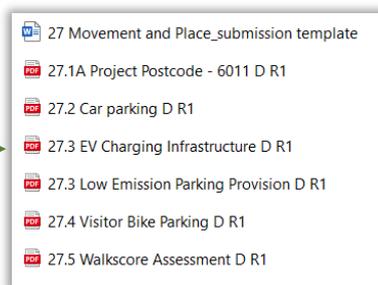
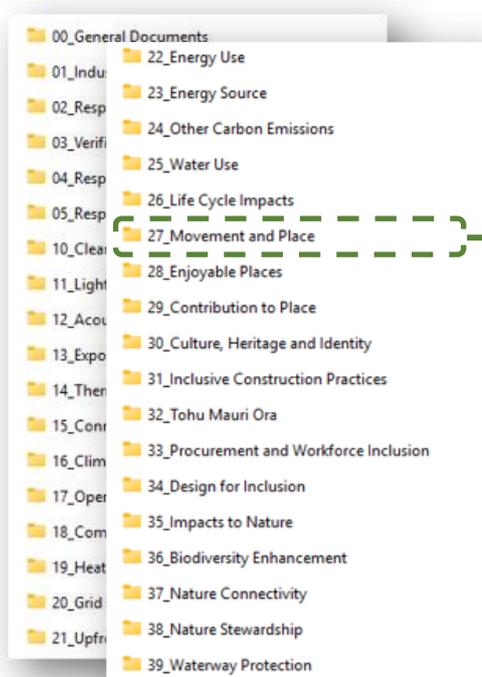
File Structure

Submissions are to be made online via an External Submissions SharePoint folder supplied by an NZGBC Certification Advisor.

Individual credit folders should contain multiple files (including the credit submission template and relevant supporting evidence). Each document should be clearly labelled and may also be numbered for ease of reference in the submission form (per the example below). All files (apart from calculators) should be in a PDF format with a consistent page formatting and size wherever possible.

Please note that the file size limit is 250MB. Some documents, e.g., drawing sets, may contain multiple layers of markup, which can significantly increase file size. In such cases, it is recommended to flatten the document using PDF editing software before submitting

Uploaded folders must be zipped, with .zip as the extension. Please also limit excessive subfolder chains, because decoded file paths cannot be longer than 400 characters.



Take note of the **file naming structure**, which clearly indicates:

- ✓ Contents of the file
- ✓ Credit or criteria the document is related to
- ✓ Numbering system which allows files to be easily sorted and identified
- ✓ Assessment type and assessment round



Highlighting and Bookmarking Documentation

As submissions typically contain large amounts of information, project teams that clearly point out relevant extracts will enable Certified Assessor(s) to more easily confirm and award compliance.

Best practice submissions effectively point out information by:

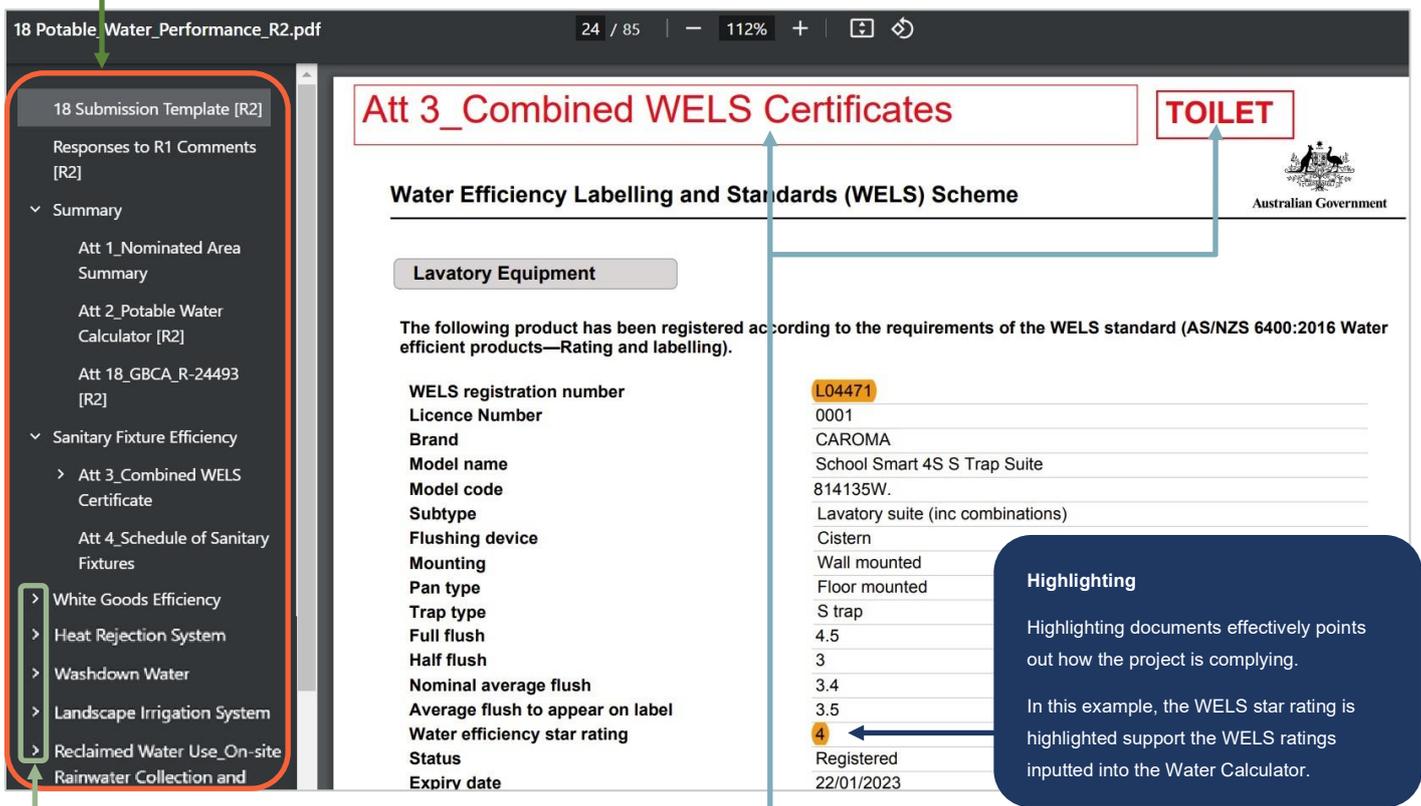
- ✓ **Bookmarking** documentation
- ✓ **Highlighting** relevant extracts
- ✓ **Annotating** extracts to explain compliance
- ✓ **Reference page numbers and documents** within the submission templates to explain how the documentation demonstrates compliance

Submissions that don't effectively highlight information may result in documentation being more easily missed, and the compliance being not awarded.

Below is an example of how this may look in a submission.

Bookmarking

Bookmarking enables documentation to be navigated and checked more easily, allowing Certified Assessor(s) to more effectively sight all the documentation submitted by the project team and confirm compliance. It also provides a useful point of reference that project teams can point to in the submission form, should the project team wish to highlight key documents. I.e., project teams can reference specific documents and bookmarks in the submission.



The screenshot shows a PDF viewer interface for a document titled "18 Potable Water_Performance_R2.pdf". The main content area displays "Att 3_Combined WELS Certificates" and "TOILET". The document is titled "Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards (WELS) Scheme" and includes a section for "Lavatory Equipment". It lists product details for a registered product (L04471) from the brand CAROMA, model "School Smart 4S S Trap Suite". The table below shows the WELS registration details:

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| WELS registration number | L04471 |
| Licence Number | 0001 |
| Brand | CAROMA |
| Model name | School Smart 4S S Trap Suite |
| Model code | 814135W. |
| Subtype | Lavatory suite (inc combinations) |
| Flushing device | Cistern |
| Mounting | Wall mounted |
| Pan type | Floor mounted |
| Trap type | S trap |
| Full flush | 4.5 |
| Half flush | 3 |
| Nominal average flush | 3.4 |
| Average flush to appear on label | 3.5 |
| Water efficiency star rating | 4 |
| Status | Registered |
| Expiry date | 22/01/2023 |

The sidebar on the left shows a list of bookmarks, with "Att 3_Combined WELS Certificate" highlighted. A blue box on the right highlights the star rating "4" in the table. A green box at the bottom left provides a tip on bookmarking, and a blue box at the bottom right explains highlighting.

Top tip: Multiple levels of bookmarks may be used to more effectively group documentation.

In this example, bookmarks are grouped based on the supporting evidence relating to each section in the Potable Water Calculator.

Annotating

Annotating allows projects to communicate compliance within the documentation.

In this example, annotations were used to highlight the documentation name,

Highlighting

Highlighting documents effectively points out how the project is complying.

In this example, the WELS star rating is highlighted support the WELS ratings inputted into the Water Calculator.

General Documents Folder

Project teams may also wish to include general documentation in the submission, such as documentation relevant to the project, but not specific to any individual credit.

Projects may include general documentation in the submission by uploading the file and naming the file accordingly. General documentation may include:

- Project overview
- Scorecard – Targeted points
- Project drawings, e.g., architectural, mech, hydraulic, electrical
- Marked-up plans indicating the rating boundary and area definition
- Clarification of Assessment Comments
- Submission Checklist – Confirming all items are submitted as per the requirements

Note that projects are encouraged to include a project overview in the submission, as this will allow projects to effectively communicate with Certified Assessor(s) key pieces of information about the project, the overall approach taken, and items to consider when assessing the submission.

The assessors will be seeing the building for the first time and may not be familiar with the location. The Architectural drawings should include some overall renders and site plans, as well as a set of general plans and elevations. This will help give the project context. Similarly, services drawings should include schematics or line diagrams showing each system.

Submitting for Assessment

Submitting for Assessment Rounds – Submission Templates and File Management

| Scenario | Submission Templates | Submission Files |
|---|--|--|
| Submitting for Round 1 | Submission Templates are to be completed for all targeted credits. | All supporting documentation to be uploaded and referenced in the relevant credit/criteria. |
| Submitting for Round 2 | <p>All Round 1 submission template entries are to be retained.</p> <p>Round 2 response/changes are to be outlined in the Discussion Box of the credit. Any new/altered text should also be highlighted.</p> <p>Note that credits awarded at Round 1 should remain as targeted. It is when the project submits for Round 2 that the submitter will be able to nominate which of the credits are being submitted for Round 2 assessment.</p> | <p>All documentation submitted at Round 1 is to be retained as the assessors may need to refer to it.</p> <p>Additional or updated documentation provided at Round 2 is to be uploaded and referenced in the relevant credit/criteria. All Round 2 documentation must be clearly named for Round 2 assessment. E.g., <i>Credit 1 Industry Development Round 2 Submission.pdf</i></p> <p>See the <i>File Naming Structure</i> section of this document for further guidance on file naming.</p> |
| | <p>Option 1: New submission</p> <p>All submission template entries AND documentation from the Designed submission are to be cleared for the Certified Submission. Project teams are then to compile the Certified submission on a clean slate. Refer to 'Submitting for Round 1' above in this table.</p> | |
| Submitting for a Certified assessment after Designed assessment | <p>Option 2: Update submission</p> <p>Alternatively, project teams may also manually update submission templates and documentation for each credit.</p> <p>Project teams may wish to use this approach to carry over submission templates/evidence from the Designed submission to the Certified submission. However, the onus would be on the project team to ensure the submission wholly reflects the Certified stage when submitting for Certified assessment. The project team must clearly outline in the 'Discussion' box which documents have been retained from the Designed submission and identify newly uploaded Certified documentation with a clear naming convention. See the <i>File Naming Structure</i> section of this document for further guidance on file naming.</p> | |

Assessment Status and Results

During assessment, the submission will be locked, and the project team will be unable to make any changes to the submission.

Following the assessment, results will be released to the project team. Where the project team seeks further guidance on the returned assessment comments, a Post Round Clarification request may be submitted via the project's Certification Advisor.

Addressing Round 2 Comments

Where a project is submitting for a Round 2 assessment, best practice submissions will clearly demonstrate how the Round 2 submission has addressed the assessment comments returned at Round 1. This allows the Certified Assessor(s) to verify and confirm that the Round 1 comment has been addressed appropriately and thereby award the credit.

Project teams are encouraged to demonstrate that the Round 1 Assessment Comment has been addressed by including a copy of the Round 1 Assessment Comment in the Discussion Box of the credit and outlining the project's Round 2 response.

An example is provided below from the Exhaust Pollutants or Elimination Pollutants criteria.

Changes between Rounds

If applicable, please use the text box below to explain any changes between Round 1 and Round 2. This is an opportunity for the GSAP to describe how they have addressed the Assessors comments in Round 2.

Round 1 Comment: Please provide contractual obligation of tenant to meet the printing and photocopying requirements. The Certified Assessors note that no evidence was provided to support this claim. Evidence expected would be in the form of a lease including or referencing the requirement.

Round 2 Response: An extract from the Tenant Fitout Guide has been provided at Round 2 which shows the tenant is required to provide a compliant low-emissions printer or provide their own compliant exhaust system. The TFG is a contractual requirement of all tenants and is in the lease agreements.

Copy of Round 1 Assessor Comment

Project Team's Round 2 Response

The project team clearly outlines explains the Round 2 approach, and the supporting documentation provided at Round 2.

The diagram illustrates a process for addressing Round 2 comments. It features a central box titled "Changes between Rounds" with a green header. Inside this box, there is a blue dashed-line box containing the "Round 1 Comment" and a green dashed-line box containing the "Round 2 Response". To the right of the central box, there are two callout boxes: a blue one labeled "Copy of Round 1 Assessor Comment" with an arrow pointing to the Round 1 comment box, and a green one labeled "Project Team's Round 2 Response" with an arrow pointing to the Round 2 response box. The Round 2 response text includes a red "XXXX" placeholder.

Appendix A: Submission Resources

The Green Star Buildings rating tool is composed of the following resources. All Green Star Buildings resources may be located via [Technical Resources](https://www.nzgbc.org.nz/green-star-buildings-nz) at [nzgbc.org.nz/green-star-buildings-nz](https://www.nzgbc.org.nz/green-star-buildings-nz)



Remember to:

- Gain access to all resources early in the process.
- Review the Submission Guidelines thoroughly, as they provide comprehensive information on how the other resources relate to a Green Star Buildings submission.
- Refer to the Calculator Guides for information on how to complete the calculators.

| Resource | Description |
|-------------------------|---|
| Submission Guidelines | The Submission Guidelines contain the requirements and benchmarks (credits) that a building must comply with to achieve a rating. All core credits are in the Submission Guidelines. The submission Guidelines will be supplied to the project’s Green Star Accredited Professional when the project registration is completed |
| Submission Planner | The Submission Planner can be used by project teams to plan the project’s submission strategy ahead of inputting into the formal Scorecard. <i>For note: This resource is for planning purposes only and cannot be used as a substitute for the Scorecard.</i> |
| Sector Specific Credits | When available, supplementary credits are published to the NZGBC Professionals Community members as they are released. |
| Leadership Challenges | Supplementary credits are published to the NZGBC Professionals Community members as they are released. See the Submission Guidelines for more details. |
| Guidance documents | Guides/ guidance documents (like this one) are developed by the NZGBC to assist project teams towards achieving a rating. They can be anything from additional templates to help project teams with a specific credit or guidance around a specific topic. They are created and released as the NZGBC recognises a need for additional guidance. |
| Calculator guides | Calculation Guides assist project teams in calculating whether specific thresholds have been met. Calculators form a part of the evidence required for certain credits. |
| Technical Question | Project teams can ask a TQ if they would like to clarify rating tool requirements or propose an alternative approach to Green Star credit requirements. Technical Questions and the responses from the NZGBC can be used as part of a submission to justify an approach to the Certified Assessor(s). TQs may be submitted via the Technical Question and Enquiry Submission Form located on our website |

| Resource | Description |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Technical Clarification Rulings | TCs provide project teams with answers to questions that are considered relevant to most buildings. These can be found online via the Technical Clarification Ruling Register |

Appendix B: Submission Checklist

Administration

- ✓ All invoices are paid.
- ✓ No technical questions are outstanding.

Eligibility Criteria

- ✓ All [eligibility criteria](#) have been met, and Eligibility Requests are included where required.
- ✓ Marked up plans with the project boundary have been included in the submission.

Submission Content

- ✓ The General Information section has been completed.
- ✓ For Certified submissions, all documentation is reflective of the As-Built stage, e.g., As-Built drawings are provided.

General Information

- ✓ General Information section has been completed.
- ✓ General documentation has been uploaded, e.g., drawings, area definitions, project overview, etc.

Submission Templates

For all targeted credits:

- ✓ All submission templates have been completed.
- ✓ Submission template responses clearly outline how the project is complying with the criteria, and how this is supported by the documentation provided.
- ✓ Documentation and page numbers are referenced to support compliance.
- ✓ All claims are supported by evidence.
- ✓ Calculators are completed where required. Where issues arise from calculators, these are resolved with the NZGBC before submitting.

Credit Documentation

- ✓ Documentation is named clearly to reflect the assessment type and round.
- ✓ Documentation has been uploaded and tagged against the relevant criteria, or the discussion box of the credit.
- ✓ Bookmarking and highlighting of relevant evidence are applied to all documentation
- ✓ Round 2 submissions include a copy of the Round 1 comment and clearly outline how it has been addressed.
- ✓ Technical Questions are included where used.