

Purpose:

Most Green Globes building assessment and certification projects are evaluated online and third party assessed/certified providing clear visibility to and mutually understood expectations with regard to the eventual final Green Globes points score and rating. The online evaluation, and Stage I design/construction review for New Construction projects, provide an effective and generally accurate means for clients to gain insight about their building's score and rating when certification is completed. Occasionally, there are some building projects that do not meet the clients expectation with respect to the final points score/rating and certification; thus, this document is intended to assist clients to a) ensure they are awarded as many credits as are available during the third party assessment process, b) to collaborate actively with their Assessor to award all eligible credits, resolve discrepancies during the resolution phase, and prevent a formal appeal, c) to clarify the process and policies for a client to initiate an appeal and d) to detail how GBI will address and conclude the appeal process.

Background:

Green Globes, by virtue of its online evaluation tool, provides clients with a self-evaluated point score, assessment report, and preliminary (projected) rating. In most cases, if the client has entered the information completely and correctly within the questionnaire, the building score and (estimated/preliminary) Green Globes rating will be fairly close to the final, third party assessed and certified Green Globes score and rating. New Construction projects further benefit from an NC Stage I report, which incorporates a third party review of the design and construction document and provides a projected Green Globes rating based on the Assessor's review.

Factors which can contribute to a deviation in the final score from the self-evaluated preliminary score include:

1. Incorrect or incomplete data entry into the online survey,
2. Changes to the building/project that have not been entered or amended in the online survey,
3. A lack of or insufficient documentation or other factual evidence to support credits claimed in the online survey. This could include inability of the assessor to gain access to building features or interview required personnel as part of the site visit.
4. Differences in interpretation of the online survey question/documentation,
5. Inappropriate use of the N/A feature,
6. Limitations of the Green Globes online tool with respect to being able to accurately award Energy Performance benchmarking points – due to building characteristics, campus assessment, or other factors
7. The building is a non-standard or complex building type that requires utilization of the flexibility inherent in Green Globes, and approved system (points) adjustments by the Green Globes Assessor in order to evaluate the building.

During the third party assessment process, the Assessor will update the online survey based on the documentation supplied and factual evidence from the site visit. After the assigned Green Globes Assessor completes his/her report, they forward it to GBI for review and preliminary approval. GBI reviews this report, and if in order, approves it and sends it to the client for review. At this point in the process, the client and GBI assigned assessor should collaborate to understand the report, rating, score, and recommendations for improvement and to ensure that the report, score, and rating are accurate. If everything is in order, no action is required, and the preliminary GBI approved report, score, and rating become final.

If meaningful discrepancies are discovered during the preliminary report review period, the client notifies GBI and the assessor, and provides specific information to enable additional evaluation. After the client and assessor communicate to address and understand the concerns, the assessor will either amend the preliminary approved report, score, and rating and forward it to GBI for review, or notify GBI that there are no changes. The amended report is then reviewed and approved by GBI and sent to the client, or the client is notified that the preliminary report results remain unchanged. This describes a routine resolution phase for Green Globes projects, where the assessor and client review the report and of their own accord are able, through review of the facts/documentation, reach agreement regarding the final score and rating without a formal appeal.

The client has two weeks to review the amended report and issue a formal appeal should they find any additional discrepancies or wish to dispute the score and rating. If GBI does not receive a formal appeal from the client within the period of time from the issuance of the preliminary/amended report, or notification that there are no changes to the preliminary report, then the Green Globes point score and rating becomes final.

Client Responsibilities:

- Accurately complete the online survey questions
- If there are questions regarding what information to supply, or how to answer a specific question, contact GBI and have our Technical Program Consultant address the question prior to the site assessment
- Have all of the documentation in the Pre-Assessment checklist ready and available for the Green Globes Assessor prior to his site visit, and/or make arrangements to deliver this information prior to the assessment
- Ensure the broader project team is available for the site assessment or is available by phone during the site visit
- Arrange full facility accessibility for inspection by the Green Globes Assessor
- Notify the Green Globes Assessor of any changes from documentation previously supplied or since the last online survey update.
- Deliver all post-assessment items requested by the Assessor immediately following the site assessment
- Promptly review the GBI issued preliminary third party assessment report, score, and rating for discrepancies/errors
- Promptly communicate any/all third party assessment/certification report concerns to the Assessor by email (not later than two weeks after the issuance of the report) copying the GBI Customer Service Manager.
- Identify specific discrepancy items and provide supporting information to enable evaluation by GBI and the Assessor
- Pay the applicable Appeal fee from the GBI price list (One time flat fee)

Assessor/Client Discrepancy Resolution and Appeal Process Overview

Category	Phase	Actions that Occur in this Period
Assessor and Client Resolution Phase	Post Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client may request 4 week delay for assessor report if desired • Assessor completes report, score, and rating and submits to GBI • GBI reviews and approves preliminary report, score, and rating • GBI sends report to client
	Preliminary Report Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client Reviews preliminary report, score, and rating • If preliminary report, score, and rating OK, no action is required. Report and rating/score become final automatically 2 Weeks after issuance if there are no discrepancies to resolve with the Assessor • If there are disputed items, notify GBI and assessor within 2 Weeks • Provide details of discrepant report/score/rating items and documentation to GBI via email to info@thegbi.org
	Assessor & Client Resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with Assessor and supply additional information necessary for him to evaluate the merits of the additional credits claimed • If report, score/rating updates are deemed warranted by the Assessor, he/she amends the preliminary report and sends it to GBI. If the Assessor determines no changes are warranted, GBI is notified.
	Amended Report Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GBI reviews and approves the amended assessor's report • GBI sends the amended report, score, and rating to the client, generally within 4 weeks of the notice from the client identifying the discrepancy/need to amend a report/score/rating. • If the amended report, score, and rating are OK, no action is required, the amended report, score and rating become final automatically
Formal Appeal Phase	Formal Appeal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there are remaining client disputed items, client notifies GBI by email at info@thegbi.org requesting a formal appeal within 2 Weeks of receiving the amended report or notice by GBI of an unchanged preliminary report. • Provide full details of the appeal and supporting documentation to GBI, including the items in dispute and customer comments. • Customer pays the appeal fee to GBI • GBI staff and/or auditing assessor review reports, score, and rating • Appeal is granted or denied (generally within 4 weeks of the clients notice of formal appeal and delivery of complete documentation) • If appeal is granted, amended report, score, and rating is issued as final. If denied, previously amended assessor report or unchanged preliminary report becomes the basis for the final report/rating. • If GBI determines the appeal was caused by GBI/Assessor error or omission, GBI will rebate the customer's appeal fee.

Request to Delay Completion of Preliminary Report:

In order to enable the award of the maximum credits, clients may (only with the agreement of the assessor) request a delay the completion of the assessor's report for a period of time if there is information available that may materially impact their score/rating. Immediately following completion of the site assessment, Clients may make a written request to GBI and to their assigned Green Globes Assessor to delay the completion of the preliminary third party assessment/certification report for up to 4 weeks after the site assessment in order to allow the delivery of additional documentation that may result in material improvement of their Green Globes score and rating. Such requests must be made with the Assessor at the time of the site visit, or shortly thereafter with the acceptance of the Assessor. Accordingly, the total delivery time for completion of the building certification will be impacted.

Preliminary Report:

The normal course of a Green Globes third party assessment and certification project includes a review period for a GBI approved, preliminary Assessor's report, score, and rating. It is expected that the client and the Assessor will specifically review any changes in the points score from the self-evaluated (online) report and third party assessed (site visit) report and collaborate to ensure the report is reflective of the building sustainability characteristics, as supported by documentation and other factual evidence. In the event there is an absence of documentation, or lack factual evidence to support the award of specific credits, it is the Assessor's responsibility to not award those credits. The process by design incorporates a collaboration period for the Assessor and client to resolve any minor discrepancies/credit award disputes without the resort to a GBI managed formal appeal.

Once the client review and assessor/client collaboration has completed, the clients must identify the differences, report discrepancies, point disputes, or concerns to both GBI and their assigned Green Globes Assessor within two weeks of the date that GBI issues the preliminary report, point score, and rating. If an amended report is required, due to identified discrepancies, up to 4 weeks may be required to amend and approve the preliminary report. It is the objective that the Green Globes Assessor and client mutually resolve any discrepancies or differences without the intervention of GBI and without a formal appeal being filed. If no communication is received from the client by GBI and/or Assessor, then the preliminary report, score and rating becomes final.

An Appeal may only be initiated within two weeks of the date that GBI notifies the client that the preliminary report that has been unchanged by the Assessor or within two weeks of the date that GBI issues the amended Assessor's report incorporating the collaboration between Assessor and client during the preliminary report review period. Necessarily, this means a client may only appeal their Green Globes final points score and rating after either a) the client has communicated with the Assessor and the Assessor denied award of additional credits, or b) the client has reviewed the report amended by the Assessor subsequent to a dispute/clarification/addition from the client and the client is still not in agreement with the amended report, points score, and Green Globes rating.

Appeal Policies and Procedures:

1. The GBI approved, preliminary Green Globes third party assessment report, score, and rating becomes final if no notification has been provided to the GBI and Assessor regarding discrepancies/need for amendment within 2 weeks of issuance or within 2 weeks of GBI notifying the customer that the preliminary report would not be amended in accordance with the Assessor's recommendation.
2. The GBI approved, amended Green Globes third party assessment report, score, and rating becomes final if no notification of formal appeal has been provided to GBI within two weeks of the date GBI issues the amended report to the client (the GBI approved amended report, score, and rating reflects the Assessor updates based on additional collaboration during the resolution period)
3. To be eligible for an appeal, the client must:
 - Notify GBI and the Assessor by email within two weeks of issuance of the GBI approved preliminary report of discrepancies
 - Provide GBI and the Green Globes Assessor with specific information and documentation regarding disputed credits/items that enables an evaluation of the merits of disputed credits.
 - Pay the Appeal Fee
 - Collaborate with the Assessor on the resolution of the disputed credit items within two weeks of notifying GBI and the Assessor of a report/scoring/rating discrepancy.
 - Register a formal appeal with GBI within two weeks of either a) notification from the Assessor/GBI that the preliminary report, score, and rating remains unchanged, or b) receipt of an amended report score and rating from GBI subsequent to client/Assessor collaboration on disputed items.
 - Client Appeals should be addressed to the GBI Customer Service Manager in an email and should contain the order number, building name, report that is disputed, individually disputed questionnaire and point award items, points scored, points requested, supporting documentation, an explanation/details regarding why those specific credits should be awarded, and any prior dialogue between themselves, GBI Assessor, and GBI staff.
 - Clearly explain what specific credits/points awards are being disputed, why, and provide supporting documentation.

4. In the absence of written timely notification by the client to GBI and its assigned Assessor regarding a dispute with preliminary report, score, and rating for their building and supporting information enabling the assessor to evaluate the merits of additional credits claimed, no appeal will be allowed. Subsequently, the preliminary report, points score, and rating shall become the final report, score, and rating.
5. Limitation on Items that May Be Appealed - Only those specific items that have been identified by the client and communicated to GBI and the Assessor by email during the two week preliminary report review period may be later appealed by the client. Exceptions will be granted for GBI/Assessor other errors/omissions introduced in the amended report, score, and rating or pre-existing and undiscovered by GBI and/or Assessor in the preliminary report, rating, and score.
6. GBI and/or its assigned Auditing Assessor, in their sole discretion, make the final determination regarding the acceptance of and disposition of any appeal.
7. Appeals which are filed with GBI for additional points/credits that have not been previously presented (with requisite supporting documentation) to the Green Globes Assessor during the preliminary report review and rating resolution period, will be rejected.
8. GBI and/or its assigned auditing Assessor may, at their discretion, review and amend points/credits awarded in any area of the third party assessment/evaluation.
9. Frivolous or inconsequential appeals (one or two points alone which do not materially affect the final Green Globes rating – one to four globes) appeals may be rejected without external audit review.

Other Information Regarding Discrepancy Resolution/Appeals

- Green Globes NC Stage I reports are not eligible for appeal (since no certification is issued) – if there is a complaint regarding the completeness/quality/accuracy of the service performed, please contact GBI
- Project that require an amended report, or include notification to GBI and Assessor of discrepancies which must be addressed in the resolution phase, may require an additional 4 weeks prior to the issuance of a GBI approved amended report, score, and rating or 2 additional weeks if an amended report is not required.
- The Appeal process may require up to 4 weeks time beginning from the time the client notifies GBI of formal appeal to the conclusion when GBI issues the final amended (post appeal) report, rating, and certification.

Appeal Fees

1. GBI will commence evaluation of a formal appeal only after receiving payment from the client for the appeal fee (one time flat fee payment from the GBI price list)
2. Appeal fees are due and payable, irrespective of whether the appeal is accepted or denied, and nonrefundable with the only exception as described in item 4 below.
3. A notice of formal appeal by a client to GBI, without accompanying payment of the appeal fee within 4 weeks shall be considered retracted by the client, and the last GBI approved report, rating, and score shall be final.
4. GBI in its sole discretion may elect to provide a rebate to the client of the appeal fee only if a) if the report, score and rating are subsequently amended based on evaluation of the appeal and b) it is determined that error or omission on the part of the assessor, or other technical/system deficiency under GBI's control was the primary cause for the report to be amended.
5. GBI may, in its discretion, require clients to pay an appeal fee in order for the Assessor to substantially amend a preliminary report, score, and rating during the client-assessor collaboration phase, only if GBI determines that the need for an amendment resulted from a failure on the part of the client to provide accurate, timely, and complete documentation and/or to provide full access to the facility and personnel, or otherwise cooperate with the Assessor prior to his completion of the preliminary report. In such a scenario, the client may elect to accept the approved preliminary report in lieu of paying the appeal fee/having the report, rating/score amended.