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The [Specialist Disability Accommodation \(SDA\) Design Standard \(PDF 8.39MB\)](#) outlines the detailed design requirements for newly built SDA seeking enrolment under the NDIS.

This standard has 4 categories of SDA design, as set out in the SDA Rules (2020):

- improved liveability
- robust
- fully accessible
- high physical support.

The SDA Design Standard improves clarity about design requirements, provider confidence and compliance by giving:

- participants access to high-quality housing models
- providers flexibility to respond to participant needs and preferences
- architects, builders and the community information about how housing for people with disability should be built.

The SDA Design Standard came into effect on 1 July 2021.

All dwelling enrolment applications must include an SDA design standard certification from an accredited third party SDA assessor. The SDA Design Standard does not apply to dwellings seeking enrolment as existing or legacy SDA.

The [SDA Design Standard implementation plan \(DOCX 211KB\)](#) outlines the timing and requirements in the lead up to the SDA design standard taking full effect.

SDA assessors

The SDA design standard requires an accredited third party SDA assessor to be engaged by the SDA developer or owner at the design stage and final as-built stage of a dwelling development.

A SDA assessor is the only person who can issue a certificate of SDA category compliance, to confirm that the design and or final-as-built dwelling has met all the requirements of the SDA Design

Standard.

The assessment at design stage is intended to provide certainty to the SDA market about future enrolment and allow the preparation for dwelling enrolment to be undertaken with the NDIA. Once the final as-built dwelling is assessed and found to be compliant with the SDA design standard, the SDA provider can then enrol the final as-built dwelling with the NDIA.

The NDIA will record the details of the project at design stage and include this in data releases to inform the market of the pipeline of work under development, noting that commercial in confidence or identifying information will be protected.

A list of all accredited SDA assessors can be found on the [LHA website](#) .

Accreditation of SDA assessors

[Access Institute](#) (external) delivers the only NDIA approved training course to allow qualified assessors to gain accreditation to assess plans and dwellings for compliance with the SDA Design Standard.

Anyone can do the course, however only specified professionals (architects, access consultants, occupational therapists and building surveyor) who meet certain prerequisites can become accredited SDA assessors.

Prerequisites for SDA assessor course

Architects, access consultants, occupational therapists and building surveyors are the only professions that meet the nominated prerequisites to become accredited SDA assessors.

Architects

- must hold current registration in a practicing category with the relevant Architects' Board in their state or territory.
- must provide evidence that they have completed the CPP40811 Certificate IV in Access Consulting or CPP50711 Diploma of Access Consulting nationally recognised qualification.

Access consultants

- must be accredited members of the Association of Consultants in Access Australia (ACAA).

- must be qualified in Access Consulting and provide evidence of completion of CPP40811 Certificate IV in Access Consulting or CPP50711 Diploma of Access Consulting nationally recognised qualification.

Occupational therapists

- must hold current registration in the general registration category with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).
- must provide evidence of completion of CPP40811 Certificate IV in Access Consulting or CPP50711 Diploma of Access Consulting nationally recognised qualification.

Building surveyors or building certifiers

- Must hold current accreditation in their state or territory under the National Accreditation Framework, as building surveyor (level 1) or building surveyor limited (level 2).
- Must provide evidence of completion of CPP40811 Certificate IV in Access Consulting or CPP50711 Diploma of Access Consulting nationally recognised qualification.

Additional requirements for building surveyors in areas not operating under the National Accreditation Framework

There are additional requirements to become an SDA assessor if you are a building surveyor operating in the following states and territories:

New South Wales

Building certifiers must have level A accreditation (grade 1 or 2) with the Building Professionals Board.

Victoria

Building certifiers must be registered with the Victorian Building Authority as a building surveyor unlimited or building surveyor limited.

Queensland

Building certifiers must be registered with Queensland Building and Construction Commission as a building certifier (level 1 or level 2) individual building.

Western Australia

Building certifiers must be registered with the Building Commission or Building Professionals Board as a building surveying practitioner level 1 or 2, or be registered as a building surveyor practitioner: technician.

Tasmania

Building certifiers must be registered with Workplace Standards as a building surveyor, a building surveyor limited, or an assistant building surveyor.

Australian Capital Territory

Building certifiers must be registered with Access Canberra as a principal building surveyor or principal building surveyor employee class; or general building surveyor or general building surveyor employee class.

Building surveyors in areas not operating under the National Accreditation

Must hold professional qualifications that would permit registration in any of the above jurisdictions.

Conflict of interest

For the purposes of the Design Standard, the NDIA aligns with the Australia Building Code Board (ABCB) definition of conflict of interest, being a situation where the private interests of a person, or their immediate friends and family, conflict with their obligations or affects their ability to carry out their work impartially and without bias.

A SDA assessor cannot certify, at either design or final-as-built-stage, any project they have designed in their capacity as an architect or building designer, or constructed in their capacity as the builder or assessed in their capacity as a building surveyor or building certifier.

Using the SDA Design Standard

The NDIA does not provide specific technical advice.

SDA assessors should interpret the design standard to the best of their professional ability.

If the Design Standard can be interpreted in different ways, SDA assessors should interpret the information that will lead to the best outcome for the participant.

For questions about the SDA design standard and any possible conflicts with other mandatory requirements, email SDAHousing@ndis.gov.au.

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