

## Third-party product conformity approval certificates

### How to assess if they meet our warranty requirements

This technical document provides additional guidance on how to assess if a third party product conformity approval certificate will meet the requirements of our Technical Manual and therefore be acceptable for our warranty.

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## 1. Considerations

- All products must demonstrate they are suitable for the intended purpose (Regulation 7 Building Regulations England and Wales and Regulation 8 for Scotland) and, in addition for our warranty purposes, meet the Functional Requirements of our Technical Manual
- Products and systems must demonstrate how they will achieve 60 years' service life if forming a structural function or 15 years in a non-structural role e.g. a non-structural weather-proof cladding
- Products demonstrating compliance\* with an applicable British or European standard, may be considered acceptable without the need for a third-party product approval, however, where:
  - There is no relevant or harmonised standard for a product or,
  - A product is being used out of the scope of a standard or
  - A system or modern method of construction is being proposed

A third-party product conformity assessment could be considered as an alternative means of assessment when determining if it is acceptable to our warranty.

\*Note: A product with a BSI Kitemark will demonstrate it meets an applicable British or European standard for that type of product. An individual test certificate to demonstrate just one area of performance of a product standard does not in itself demonstrate the product meets the whole standard.

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## 2. Third-party product conformity approvals: which ones are acceptable for our warranty purposes?

A third-party product conformity approval will need to be:

- A UKAS-assessed organisation or European equivalent e.g. ILAC (International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation) or IAF (International Accreditation Forum) that has been approved as a '**Product Conformity body**' AND the UKAS website identifies which products/systems they have been accepted to carry out product approvals for, **OR**

- A UK market conformity assessment body (CABs) identified in the UKMCAB database, **OR**
- An assessment body that is currently accepted by our warranty subject to additional reviews of each certification (see the list at end of this document)

Please note: none of the above third-party approvals will state that a product or system will meet the requirements of our warranty. The approval certificates should therefore not be considered as automatically meeting our standards and will still need to be checked carefully to assess:

- That our additional warranty Technical manual requirements are met. For example, a third-party product approval for an EWI system may have been assessed for use on a framed substrate without a cavity BUT to gain our warranty approval, a cavity must be provided
- The product/system to be used, is within the scope of the certificate (products used outside the scope will not be accepted)
- Where a product is not covered by a British or European harmonised standard, but a third-party product approval is issued, the current position of the warranty provider will take precedence. I.e. we may consider a product represents a high risk and therefore will not be acceptable
- A history claims for products or systems will form part of any stance the warranty takes, which might not be recognised in the third-party product approval
- A certificate for a single test result for a product by a UKAS-accredited testing laboratory (e.g. for a hygrothermal result) is not a full third-party product conformity approval as it will not cover other areas of assessment (see below)
- A declaration of performance issued by the manufacturer of a product is not a third-party product approval
- A European Technical Assessment (ETA) will not identify reference to meeting UK Building Regulations. It may also indicate that quality assurance (QA) procedures for the manufacture of the product, have not been assessed

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### 3. What to look for in a third-party product conformity approval certificate

#### a. Is the certificate valid?

We can only consider product approval certificates that are current. They must be displayed/available on the certifier's website. The absence of a certificate may indicate they have been withdrawn or suspended. There should be a date of issue on the certificate and (where applicable) identify any revision date.

#### b. Scope and description (or conditions of use)

The first important point is to check the scope and description parts of the document. This will identify:

- What the product is
- The intended use (for example, if assessed for use with masonry substrates only – so not assessed for framed)
- What components **form part of the product/system?** It is important for warranty purposes that the actual products assessed are clearly identified in the certificate. I.e. the manufacturer name and type of each component. Without this information it will be uncertain:
  - what products have actually been tested,

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- are they acceptable to the Warranty provider, or
- have the QA assessments undertaken by the third-party body included the manufacturing process of all the components? For example, has a significant part of the product been manufactured by others and the QA assessment has not included this?
- Are any components forming part of the product known to be a product which is not acceptable to the warranty provider?
- Which components are outside of the scope of the assessment? For example, the certificate may identify components that are not part of the assessment such as fixings, membranes or substrates which the product is connected to. This is an important consideration when assessing what has been covered by the third-party approval.

## c. Areas assessed

Product approval certificates should provide details of the product/system performance for a number of key areas (see list below). However, not all certificates do, so it is important to identify what performance has been assessed, and what has not.

Product certificates typically do not always follow a standard format and each approval body follows a different style. However the following key areas should normally be covered:

- **Structural integrity:** What performance is stated? If, for example, only details of impact resistance are identified this will not suffice if there is nothing to identify load-bearing performance of the product if it is to be used to carry loads or transfer them to a load bearing element.
- **Safety in case of fire:** Has appropriate testing been carried out? For example, is the test appropriate for the use of the product with the proposed substrate or is the test limited to a specific tested construction?
- **Resistance to water penetration, vapour permeability and dangerous substances:** For example, does the assessment identify (if forming part of the water proof element) that it is suitable in all wind-driven rain exposure zones in the UK? Often a statement will say that the product 'contributes towards weather resistance' or 'improves thermal performance'. That may not mean however that it provides the weather resistance or achieves the required thermal performance without other parts of the construction also having to contribute.
- **Safety in use**
- **Acoustic characteristics**
- **Thermal and movement characteristics**
- **Compatibility of materials:** I.e. interaction between component, structural or otherwise – it may be that some fixings or surrounding materials or substrates may not be compatible leading to premature corrosion or deterioration of materials. Think what other products are being used with the particular component – will they be acceptable? Is the product limited for use only with certain materials?
- **Durability and longevity of materials:** Our warranty Functional Requirement for 60 years and 15 years apply, does the certificate confirm this?
- **Maintenance requirements and provisions:** Some products may require more frequent maintenance to achieve the durability requirements expected by our warranty. Is this identified? E.g. products used in a coastal or aggressive environment may not achieve the levels of durability as in other environments.

It is likely some bodies may not have assessed some of the above areas, or state that the assessment doesn't cover a particular area/no performance declared. For warranty purposes this

may be critical, if say, no performance is shown in relation to water tightness for a product that will be used in the external weather-proof envelope.

In such situations, the product might not meet warranty requirements if this information is missing.

Where such information is missing, the manufacturer's or product assessment body should be contacted to provide further information. Further guidance on the above is found in [Appendix C2 of the Premier Guarantee Technical Manual](#).

#### **d. Quality assurance**

It will be expected that as part of the product conformity approval, the assessment body will have assessed quality management checks in place for the manufacturer of the product. This must include all parts of the product. Some components might not be manufactured by the certificate holder. Therefore, ask have the externally manufactured components been assessed?

#### **e. Detailing of use/installation**

Does the product conformity certificate clearly identify how the product is to be used and installed? Are there details and images that clearly show this? If not, is there reference to the manufacturers installation guide? Will the installation meet our warranty requirements?

Our guidance in the [Premier Guarantee Technical Manual](#) or supporting articles should be referred to and may override the guidance in product approval certificate for any warranty project covered by us.

Are the products or systems assessed and approved on the basis that only approved contractors or installers should be used? If so, is that the case on the project? Is there a list of approved installers provided by the manufacturer?

#### **f. Does the certificate identify the product meets national Building Regulations?**

The product approval certificate should identify which requirements of national Building Regulations the product can satisfy. If, for example, a product forms part of the external weather-proof element, are the relevant requirements listed as being shown to satisfy?

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## 4. Assessment bodies acceptable to warranty as at October 2021

The following list of assessment bodies or schemes are currently acceptable to Premier Guarantee. Note, this list is updated on a regular basis. Please check our website for the most current version of this document.

### **UKAS-accredited organisation approved to provide product conformity certification for construction products and systems\*\***

- Certifications by British Board of Agrément (BBA)
- BRE Global certification

\*\*The UKAS Schedule of Accreditation for the organisation must be checked to confirm in the details section what products or systems the organisation has been approved to assess. This can be found at [www.ukas.com](http://www.ukas.com). (Other organisations are also listed as approved for product conformity)

### **Non UKAS accredited organisations**

- Kiwa BDA subject to each certificate being assessed by our warranty technical standards section.

### **Other schemes**

- For glass fibre reinforced plastic (GRP) products:
  - Subject to either BBA Certification or CGFMA certification
- For wood products and systems:
  - BM Trada – Q Mark certification
  - Structural Timber Association (silver/gold) - for timber frame only
  - CATG Framemark
- For curtain walling and cladding systems:
  - Agrément Certificate or WinMark certification
- BSI Kitemark schemes

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## 5. Warranty position

For our warranty purposes, it should not be assumed that a third party product approval for a product is enough without:

- a) Carefully checking the contents to ensure the requirements of the warranty Technical Manual are met and
- b) The product is being used within the scope of the assessment.

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## 6. Useful Links

- UKAS - <https://www.ukas.com/find-an-organisation/>
- ILAC - <https://ilac.org/signatory-search/>
- IAF - <https://iaf.nu/en/accreditation-bodies/>
- UKMCAB database - <https://www.gov.uk/uk-market-conformity-assessment-bodies>
- BBA - <https://www.bbacerts.co.uk/search/>
- KIWA BDA - <https://www.kiwa.com/gb/en/about-kiwa/kiwa-bda-agreement-search/>
- CGFMA - <https://cgfma.co.uk/members/>
- BM Trada - <https://www.exovabmtrada.com/en-gb/certification/certificate-check>
- STA - <https://www.structuraltimber.co.uk/members>
- BSI - <https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/product-directory/>

*Every care was taken to ensure the information in this article was correct at the time of publication. Guidance provided does not replace the reader's professional judgement and any construction project should comply with the relevant Building Regulations or applicable technical standards. For the most up to date Premier Guarantee technical guidance please refer to your Risk Management Surveyor and the latest version of the [Premier Guarantee Technical Manual](#).*