

Application assessment

This is an old version of the page

Date published: 10 September, 2024

Date superseded: 23 September, 2025

For recent changes to this guidance, please see the [bottom of the page](#).

Initial assessment

Once an application is received by the due deadline it will be assigned to a case officer from RPID or NatureScot to assess against the Scheme requirements.

The initial assessment process is broken down into two stages:

- stage one – completion of basic application eligibility checks
- stage two – completion of full application eligibility checks and the assessment of the selected options and /or capital items

Stage one Assessment

This requires the case officer to answer the first seven questions in the application eligibility checks, to ensure the application meets the basic scheme eligibility requirements.

Application eligibility

A failure at this stage will result in an automatic rejection of the application and it will not progress to stage two for the further detailed assessment.

Applicants will be issued with a letter setting out the reasons for rejecting the application.

Stage two assessment

The case officer works through the remainder of the eligibility questions and also assesses the eligibility/suitability of each option and capital item applied for. They also check whether all the necessary documents, including management plans, have been provided and are fit for purpose.

This part of the assessment will include a discussion with the applicant and may also include a site visit.

In order for the application to progress, case officers must be satisfied by the end of the visit / discussion that the applicant has an understanding of the option requirements and how the plan will fit with their current land management.

For example, stock exclusion dates versus forage requirements.

By 'applicant', we mean any individuals responsible for delivery of the contract.

For Agri-environment schemes, this could be, for example, the farmer / crofter, the farm manager or the estate factor.

It is unlikely that the agent completing the Agri-environment Climate Scheme application is going to be the individual responsible for day-to-day management of the contract.

If a site visit is carried out, this may include a check of the accuracy of submitted maps, the eligibility of certain options or site linkage across the holding.

Previous non-compliance with previous AECS contracts will be checked prior to any site visit and we will wish to discuss and address any issues with the applicant to ensure this isn't repeated.

Applicant's comments

If an on-site visit is undertaken, the applicant will be invited to enter comments and sign the report.

The signature is recognition of the fact that the applicant was present at the site visit and the comments are an accurate record of what was discussed.

If a site visit is not undertaken and a discussion is held by telephone, the case officer will record a brief description of the main points discussed. An electronic copy of these comments can be made available to the applicant on request.

Types of acceptable amendment

Only small changes to a submitted application can be made by the case officer after the application deadline has passed and the assessment process is underway, for example:

- correction of Land Parcel Identifiers (LPIDs). For example, where a hedge is proposed between two fields and the wrong LPID is used
- correcting typographic or arithmetical errors
- transposition errors, for example mixing up numbers like 3, for 8 or 5

And, for applications that reach Stage two, we cannot accept the wholesale change of the plan, or significant amendments.

We cannot accept removal of ineligible options or changing the location of options because the applicant has not understood what was being applied for at the time of application.

For example, removing a field from the wader-grazed grassland option because insufficient land has been left clear for grazing livestock or changing a field from one management option to another.

If significant changes are required, the application will be deemed as not up to standard and will be rejected.

We therefore strongly advise you to consult with RPID or NatureScot before submitting your application, if you have any queries; for example, regarding land eligibility for particular options.

Final assessment

Once all applications are assessed fully and scored, budgetary restrictions may result in some applications being approved whereas others are part approved or rejected, either by the Approving Officer or by the National Project Assessment Committee, as appropriate.

Notification of decision

Applicants will be notified of the decisions reached and (where applicable) be provided with the reasons why an application is part approved or rejected.

Reviews

If an applicant is not satisfied with our decision following the Initial or Final elements of the assessment process they may wish to ask us to undertake a [formal review](#).

The [How to Apply](#) and [Eligibility](#) pages have more detailed information.

Recent changes

Section	Change
Initial Assessment	Added text below Stage 2 Assessment heading to explain case officers also check whether all the necessary documents, including management plans, have been provided and are fit for purpose.
Final Assessment	September 2024 - added sentence referring to How to Apply and Eligibility pages for more detailed information.

Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)

Download guidance

Click 'Download this page' to create a printer-friendly version of this guidance that you can save or print out.

