

# BUSTING INDUSTRY MYTHS: NGBS Green Certification & Commissioning



One of the most common myths about the National Green Building Standard™ (NGBS) is that it does not require building commissioning for certification. This is not correct. While the NGBS does not use the term “commissioning” specifically, there are multiple NGBS practices that are, in effect, building commissioning.

Below are sample talking points that NGBS Green Partners can use to bust any myths they may hear from developers, city planners, or others regarding commissioning. For a more detailed comparison of NGBS and LEED commissioning requirements, see our [full document](#) on the NGBS Green Advocacy webpage.

## **MYTH:** *The NGBS does not address fundamental commissioning of energy systems.*

Fundamental commissioning is a process that aims to ensure a building’s energy systems are properly installed and calibrated to project goals.

While the NGBS does not use the term “commissioning,” there are numerous items within the *Energy Efficiency and Homeowner Education & Maintenance* practice areas that address the intent of fundamental commissioning. Most of these practices are mandatory and required for all projects. These items are comparable to or exceed LEED Fundamental Commissioning requirements.

## **MYTH:** *The NGBS does not address enhanced commissioning.*

Enhanced commissioning goes beyond fundamental commissioning by ensuring early design review, review of contractor submittals, development of a systems manual, verification of training for building personnel, and review of building operations following project completion. While the NGBS does not have a specific practice titled “enhanced commissioning,” there are numerous practices within the *Energy Efficiency and Homeowner Education and Maintenance* practice areas that address the intent of enhanced commissioning. Many of these practices are mandatory and required for all projects.

Generally, these are similar in intent and broader in scope (addressing more than just HVAC systems) than the requirements of the LEED BD+C Enhanced



Commissioning credit. The NGBS “enhanced commissioning” practices address a longer timeframe than the requirements of the LEED credit. While the LEED Enhanced Commissioning credit includes an option for building operations to be reviewed 10 months after project completion, an NGBS optional practice specifies 2 years of monitoring of energy and water use post-occupancy.

## **MYTH:** *A commissioning agent is more qualified than a green building consultant, such as an NGBS Green Verifier.*

Many perceive a “commissioning agent” to be a highly qualified independent third-party professional. However, for LEED project certification, a commissioning agent may be employed by the building owner or the project’s design or construction firm. Experience is required, but the commissioning agent does not need to hold any specific expertise or credential.

The NGBS requirements for on-site verification and testing are more stringent than LEED in that they require no conflict of interest. To achieve Home Innovation’s NGBS Green Certification, on-site verification by an independent, third-party, accredited NGBS Green Verifier is required. Home Innovation does not allow members of the owner company or anyone from the design or construction firms to perform verification on projects for which they are providing design or construction services.