

NABERS RULING:

Exclusion of Data Centres in Office Ratings

Released: September 2015

1 Purpose and Principle

This ruling recognises that large data centres are not office space or office support facilities. It allows an optional method for excluding large data centres from the base building rating regardless of servicing arrangements so the building may pursue the most energy and water efficient solution for their building.

2 Scope

This ruling should be read in conjunction with the current *NABERS Energy and Water for Offices Rules for Collecting and Using Data* and *NABERS Energy for Offices Validation Protocol for Thermal Energy Exclusions*.

Large data centres are not office space as they are not used for administrative or clerical work and are typically not fit for office use. Large data centres are also characterised by servicing external users, rather than internal users as an office support facility. This ruling applies to office base building and office water ratings that contain a large data centre that primarily services external users.

A typical computer server room that primarily services the office tenant is an office support facility and is found in almost all office buildings to support tenant operations. They are considered part of the office rating.

Data centres with a connected load of 10 kW or greater are able to obtain a rating under the NABERS Data Centres tool. It is anticipated that all data centres with a primary purpose of servicing external users will have a connected load greater than 10 kW.

2.1 Qualifying Data Centres

Large data centres are not considered to be comparable to office space and can be excluded under this Ruling. A data centre must meet at least one of the following attributes to qualify as a large data centre:

1. The data centre comprises at least 10% of the NLA of the rated building. This refers to NLA rather than rated area.
2. The data centre comprises at least 25% of the NLA of the tenancy within which is it located. This refers to NLA rather than rated area.
3. At least 75% of the data centre's capacity must be dedicated to external use to meet the definition of primary purpose in regards to this ruling. Users from the tenancy that are working out of the office and connecting remotely are not considered to be external users.

Note: multiple data centres/computer server rooms cannot be combined to meet the criteria. Each individual data centre must meet the criteria above to be considered large.

3 Exclusion of Data Centres

3.1 Clarification of treatment of Data Centres

In the NABERS Energy and Water for Offices Rules for Collecting and Using Data Section 3.6, figure 7: Overview – treatment of computer server rooms currently states that computer server room functional spaces are treated as any other office space in terms of a base building rating. This is in regards to area and energy inclusion.

A large data centre that qualifies as a Large Data Centre under this Ruling is not classified as office space and the water, energy and area associated with the data centre may be excluded from a base building energy or water rating.

Power for the data centre, such as IT infrastructure, may be excluded from any base building rating as long as compliant metering is in place as this is not part of the minimum energy coverage.

Treatment of data centres for Tenancy or Whole Building Energy ratings remains unchanged.

3.2 Office Base Building Energy

A building excluding a data centre from a base building rating:

- Must exclude the area of the data centre functional space from the area calculation.
- May exclude the energy used by the data centre where adequate metering is in place.
- May exclude the thermal energy transferred through the air conditioning system.

Where HVAC services are provided centrally, thermal metering may be required to determine the proportion of energy use which should be excluded from the rating. In such cases, the Standard Methodology in the *Validation Protocol for Thermal Energy Exclusions* must be used. The Simplified Methodology also listed in such document cannot be used because a data centre does not have 'equivalent use' to office space.

3.3 Office Water

A building excluding a data centre from a water rating:

- Must exclude the area of the data centre functional space from the area calculation.
- May exclude the water used by the data centre heat rejection equipment if the heat rejection equipment services the data centre only.

3.4 Compliant metering

All metering must meet the requirements of the NABERS Rules and Rulings that are relevant for the building type being rated.

3.5 Documentation

Assessors are required to sight and obtain copies of documentation that demonstrate the data centre meets the criteria for exclusion. Example documentation includes:

- fitout drawings that show the size of the data centre
- lease plans/drawings that clearly define the area of the data centre
- a list of active users that defines which are internal and external users or, alternatively, a signed letter from the data centre confirming the percentage of external users.