

HOLIDAY HOMES CLASSIFICATION MANUAL



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Introduction

The Qatar National Tourism Council (QNTC) is responsible for licensing, classification and grading of all Holiday Homes and accommodation providers in Qatar.

Under Law No. 20 of 2018, QNTC is mandated to ensure that Holiday Homes holding or requesting a license meet clear criteria of facilities and services. Holiday Homes are classified according to a published “Grading and Classification Manual”, which is updated and published from time to time. Currently Holiday Homes are all graded as Standard and divided into the following categories:

Holiday Homes:

Villas and Apartments.

This manual presents the structure and criteria of Holiday Homes classification system for the State of Qatar. This system plays a central role in the continued drive of establishing Qatar as a leading destination in terms of quality and hospitality.

System focus areas:

Table 1 outlines the eight different focus areas of the system, their description and how they relate to the system.

Table 1- Focus Areas Of Classification Criteria

Focus Area	Description
1- Unit	Requirements focussing on the whole unit.
2- Living room	Requirements focussing on the Living room of the unit.
3- Bedroom	Requirements focussing on the individual bedrooms.
4- Bathroom	Requirements focussing on the individual bathrooms.
5- Kitchen/ Preparatory Kitchen	Requirements focussing on the kitchen (inside and outside the main unit)
6- Assistant/ Worker Room	Requirements focussing on the assistant room if found in the Unit.
7- Technical Specifications	Requirements focussing on the unit public areas, building, safety and security and access control.
8- Technical Specifications	Requirements that focus on systems and facilities that enhance the environmental sustainability of the unit.
9- Accessible Rooms	Requirements for People with Special Needs.

System Elements

The Classification system includes 3 elements:

1. Main & Sub
2. Optional
3. Guest Experience

Main & Sub elements are measured as minimum criteria, that is, a standard must be fulfilled for a certain classification to be fulfilled.

Optional elements are considered as added value to the unit.

Table 2- System Elements And Their Definitions

Focus Area	Description
1. Main & Sub Criteria	Criteria that reflect minimum expectations of the traveller and need to be completely fulfilled for each respective category.
2. Optional Criteria	Criteria that are not a traveller's minimum expectation but do create substantial value in the guest experience.
3. Guest Experience Index	The average weighted online review score from up to 130 online review platforms weighted per platform and per reviewer. The Guest Experience index will only apply after a holiday home unit classification has been awarded. Holiday Homes then need to achieve a minimum final score and will be subject to review if the minimum score is not achieved.

Guest Experience Index

Service delivery standards comprise of the most influential determinants of guest satisfaction. Historically it has been difficult, if not impossible to measure these objectively.

By partnering with one of the World's leading companies in Guest Sentiment analysis, the National Tourism has access to a measuring tool that generates the most objective score possible from a vast volume of guest reviews taken from over 130 guest review platforms.

This score is balanced by weighing factors that account more value to verified feedback platforms (e.g. HolidayHomes.com; Airbnb.com) over non-verified feedback platforms (e.g. TripAdvisor.com).

A minimum score of 75% of guest satisfaction should be reached, however in case of underperforming over a period of 3 consecutive months, the licensee will be asked to rectify the issue within the next month; failure to do so will result in losing the tourism license.

Classification Process

This section outlines the processes involved in applying for and renewing the Holiday Homes classification.

First an outline is presented in the entire system after which the typical processes are outlined.

The classification process is designed to be both efficient and effective. Figure 1 outlines how the different elements of the system are approached from a process perspective:

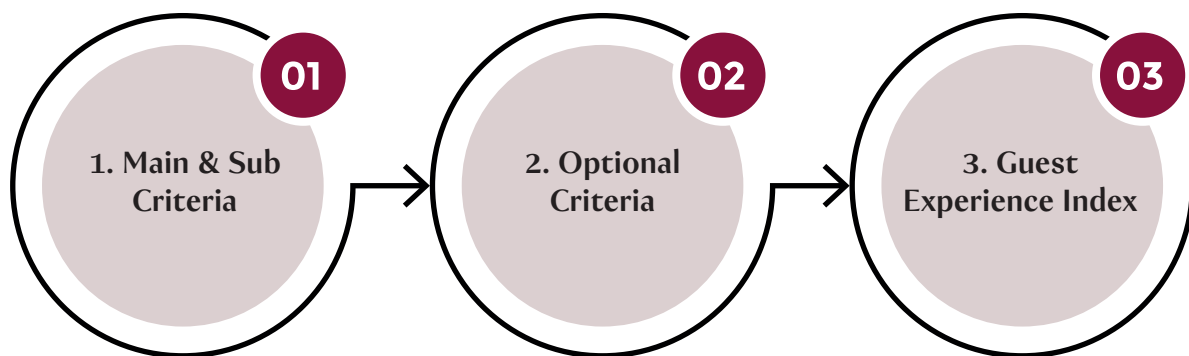


Figure 1-The classification process

1- A Holiday Home Unit will first need to comply with the Main & Sub Criteria for its category. These criteria reflect the minimum expectations that a guest would have of the rating applied for and must be fulfilled.

2- Second, a minimum score needs to be attained on the Optional Criteria. It represents tangible criteria that add value to the guest but do not necessarily reflect a minimum expectation.

3- After the Holiday Homes classification has been awarded, the Department monitors the Guest Experience Index (GEI) monthly.

Classification Procedure

Procedure

1. Holiday Homes are categorized together with the License application.
2. Applicants must ensure that all specifications and conditions are met before applying for a License, by completing and signing-off a self-assessment form through classification system.
3. A classification visit will be scheduled, giving the Unit Owner/ Operators at least one (1) weeks' notice of the inspection date. Applicants must ensure that the Unit is empty of any guests or visitors at the time of inspection.
4. The Licensing Department Inspection team shall then visit the Unit, checking and confirming its conformity with the applicable standards expected from the category applied for.
5. A classification report shall then be prepared and provided to the Unit Owner/ Operators within 2 working days of the inspection, noting any deficiencies.
6. The Unit Owner/ Operators shall then have a period of 1 week to complete all the noted deficiencies and rectify any of the comments mentioned within the classification report.
7. The Licensing Inspection team shall again visit and re-inspect the unit, including a re-assessment of those areas, services and facilities noted as deficient in the initial report. A final report shall be completed and distributed within 2 working days of the final inspection.
8. Where all areas and deficiencies have been suitably addressed, the unit shall receive its permanent Classification Certificate valid for five (5) years or equal to the tourism license validity.
9. Where a Holiday Home Owner/Operator fails to complete the works and quality standards required for a proposed classification, the application for Holiday Homes License will be rejected.
10. Rejected applicants can only reapply again after 3 months from the date of application rejection.

Spot Check Inspections Carried Out Ad Hoc By The Department

Department inspectors may conduct spot checks on an ad hoc basis in order to ensure that Holiday Homes Units are complying with the required standards of both their license and the respective classification.

Violations

It may occur that during a classification inspection, inspectors identify serious violations that may:

1. Jeopardise the safety of guests.
2. Are unhygienic to the extent of creating a health hazard.
3. Jeopardise the reputation or the good order in the State; or
4. Comprise an illegal activity.

Inspectors, by nature of their job are bound to report any of these matters. This will result in either writing a warning letter or a fine.

Classification Criteria

The objective of the Classification Criteria is to:

1. Provide the foundation of the system and the standards of the 2 categories (Villas & Apartments)
2. Ensure that the Minimum Expectations of the guests that they would have of the respective category are always fulfilled.

1- Unit

1- Unit	Criteria #	Criteria	Villas	Apartments
Main	1.1	Acceptable furniture and equipment (subject to good maintenance without damage)	√	√
	1.2	Adequate floor covering or finish	√	√
	1.3	A landline telephone for making local calls	√	√
	1.4	Wireless Internet service (Wi-Fi)	√	√
	1.5	Central air conditioning, or separate air conditioning unit	√	√
	1.6	Adequate wall covering or finishes	√	√
	1.7	Cleaning tools and accessories (for unit, rooms, bathrooms, and kitchen)	√	√
	1.8	Washing machine	√	√
	1.9	Unit License and Classification Certificate shown in a clear place	√	√
Sub	1.10	Curtains or blackout to completely darken the unit	√	√
	1.11	Ashtray for smoking rooms only	√	√
	1.12	Waste basket	√	√
	1.13	Electric iron and ironing board	√	√
	1.14	Clothes drying stand	√	-
	1.15	Vacuum cleaner	√	√
	1.16	First aid kit for use in emergencies	√	√
	1.17	Number on the door of each unit/or number on each villa	√	√
	1.18	Lock and security key for each unit door	√	√
	1.19	Peephole or intercom system on each unit/villa/door	√	√
	1.20	Emergency procedures in Arabic and English. Emergency contact numbers in Arabic and English	√	√
	1.21	Provide emergency tools (fire extinguishers/fire blankets/gloves/torch)	√	√
	1.22	Accurate Unit address placed by the phone	√	√
	1.23	Contact numbers for the purpose of round- the-clock assistance and maintenance	√	√
	1.24	Visitor Guide including details of building services, important nearby public facilities, and a list of unit contents, in addition to QNTC contact form for complaints or inquiries	√	√
	1.25	Qibla direction	√	√

2- Living Room

2-Living Room	Criteria #	Criteria	Villas	Apartments
Main	2.1	Sofa or armchair for two people, per bedroom or studio	√	√
	2.2	Dining table with at least two chairs, per bedroom or studio	√	√
	2.3	Colour T.V. with remote control	√	√
Sub	2.4	Rug or carpet	√	√

3- Bedroom

3- Bedroom	Criteria #	Criteria	Villas	Apartments
Main	3.1	"Minimum bedroom floor area (excluding the bathroom and the entrance) being as follows:	√	√
		- bedroom 12 sqm		
		- Studio 17 sqm"		
	3.2	"Beds with headboard and modern mattresses, sheets, pillows, and clean bedspreads of suitable sizes as a minimum:	√	√
		*Main bedroom:		
		- Bed length 200 cm and width 150 cm		
		* Studios and other bedrooms:		
		- Single beds length 190 cm and width 90 cm		
	- Double beds are 190 cm long and 135 cm wide"			
	3.3	Bedside table with drawer or shelf, as well as a shaded bedside lamp	√	√
3.4	Wardrobe or cupboard with shelves and a mirror	√	√	
3.5	A wardrobe with hangers (at least 6 hangers)	√	√	
3.6	Safe box inside the wardrobe or in a hidden place, per studio and main bedroom (with user directions)	√	√	
Sub	3.7	Two sets of bed sheets and pillow covers for every bed	√	√
	3.8	Chest of drawers or shelves for clothes (can be part of the above-mentioned wardrobe).	√	√
	3.9	Carpet or rug for each bedroom	√	√

4- Bathroom

4- Bathroom	Criteria #	Criteria	Villas	Apartments
Main	4.1	Shower, or bathtub for each en-suite bathroom	√	√
	4.2	Sink with mirror and lighting	√	√
	4.3	Lidded WC	√	√
	4.4	Hot and cold running water	√	√
	4.5	Bathing and personal hygiene accessories (such as: soap, shampoo)	√	√
	4.6	Curtain for each shower or bathtub	√	√
Sub	4.7	Handle for bathtubs	√	√
	4.8	Two sets of towels (bath towel, hand towel, bathmat) for each room	√	√
	4.9	WC spray washer or bidet	√	√
	4.10	Towel holder	√	√
	4.11	Bathmat	√	√
	4.12	Soap holder	√	√
	4.13	Hooks	√	√
	4.14	Shelves for cosmetics	√	√

5- Kitchen

5- Kitchen	Criteria #	Criteria	Villas	Apartments
Main	5.1	Sink and draining board	√	√
	5.2	Hot and cold running water	√	√
	5.3	Cooking device (not required in preparatory kitchens if there is a kitchen that meets the specifications)	√	√
	5.4	Fridge (not required in preparatory kitchens if there is a kitchen that meets the specifications)	√	√
	5.5	Microwave	√	√
Sub	5.6	Waste bins with covers	√	√
	5.7	Cooking utensils (saucepans, casserole, stockpot with lids, fry pan, nylon utensils)- 1 set per unit	√	√
	5.8	Tableware for each bedroom (including glassware, ceramic dishes, spoons, knives, cups) - two sets per bedroom	√	√
	5.9	Odour extractor fan	√	√

6- Assistant/Worker Room

6- Assistant Worker Room	Criteria #	Criteria	Villas	Apartments
Main	6.1	"Minimum bedroom floor area (excluding the bathroom and the entrance) being as follows:	√	√
		- bedroom 9 sqm"		
	6.2	"Beds with headboard and modern mattresses, sheets, pillows and clean linens for beds of appropriate sizes as a minimum:	√	√
		- Single beds 190 cm long and 90 cm wide"		
6.3	A wardrobe with hangers (at least 3)	√	√	
Sub	6.4	Rug or carpet	√	√

7- Technical Specification

7-Technical Specifications	Criteria #	Criteria	Villas	Apartments
Main	7.1	Fully fenced except for villas in closed communities	√	-
	7.2	Provide adequate lighting for main entrance, corridors, and stairways and full unit to ensure safety	√	√
	7.3	Building security guard – units that are part of closed complexes	√	√
	7.4	If there is a fence, a door and lock must be provided	√	-
	7.5	CCTV for all main entrances	√	√
	7.6	Elevator serving from the ground floor if the building consists of three or more stories.	√	√
	7.7	A board must be installed, including the unit's address, Classification, Permit number, Licensee contact number, and QNTC number & email	√	√
	7.8	Units that are part of closed communities must consist of at least four houses or villas	√	-
Sub	7.9	If there is a swimming pool, there must be warnings/signs and adequate safety equipment (floats, life rings, first aid kits, lifeguard duty hours etc.)	√	√
	7.10	Parking for at least one car	√	√
	7.11	In case of having a swimming pool and a gym the service must be provided	√	√
	7.12	Highlight basic community rules that must be followed by Guests when present in the Holiday Home	√	√
	7.13	Paved road access to the property	√	√

8- Sustainability Specifications

8-Sustainability Specifications	Criteria #	Criteria	Villas	Apartments
Optional	8.1	Smart noise notification system	√	√
	8.2	QNTC encourages operators to use clean or efficient methods of transportation for Guests and employees, including public transport, fast transportation, cycling, or walking	√	√
	8.3	Reduction of waste resulting from cosmetics such as shampoo, soap, shower caps, and other such items by providing them in limited quantities or providing recyclable options	√	√
	8.4	Provide waste bins or signs to main building waste bins requiring the separation of different types of waste	√	√
	8.5	Provide a water filter in the kitchen sink to provide clean drinking water with regular maintenance	√	√
	8.6	Smart locks	√	√
	8.7	Smart lighting and air conditioning systems	√	√

9- Disabled Rooms Specifications

9-Disabled Rooms	Criteria #	Criteria	Villas	Apartments
Main	9.1	In case of advertising for disabled rooms, special requirements should be met (check Disabled Rooms Annex)	√	√

Annex: Accessibility Standards

This appendix provides more detailed information on the accessibility standards for disabled guests. The requirements mentioned apply to Villas & Apartments categories in case this feature was advertised/offered to guests.

Accessibility Route

This route refers to a dedicated path for guests with special needs from the point of arrival to accessible rooms and all public areas. The following principles apply to this path:

1. Minimum width at any point in the route is 152 cm.
2. If the route has a change in level greater than 130 cm, then a curb, ramp, or wheelchair-lift is available.
3. Ramps have a maximum slope of 1:12 for a maximum rise of 76 cm; however, the least possible slope should be used with a smooth transition from ramp to floor.
4. Ramps have handrails if the rise is greater than 15.5 cm.
5. Curb ramps should be provided when an accessible route has a curb in its path.
6. Doors open at least 95 degrees.
7. Doors have minimum clear opening of 90 cm.
8. Doors should have a clear space of 120 cm x 120 cm before and after opening.
9. Door handles set at height between 80 and 130 cm.
10. End of corridor highlighted by colour, tone or light contrast between walls and floor coverings.

Accessibility Route

1. Toilet height 43 - 49 cm measured to top of toilet seat.
2. Grab bars to the side of the toilet at height of 83 - 92 cm
3. Flush controls maximum height of 112 cm from floor.
4. Toilet paper dispensers at 48 - 83 cm height and below grab bars.
5. Clearance of at least 142 cm between door and toilet.
6. Clearance from entry to stall door 152 cm.
7. Lavatory counter is not higher than 86 cm with no less than 75 cm underneath with no sharp or abrasive surfaces. Water pipes and surfaces should all be insulated.
8. Clear front space of 90 cm x 122 cm in front of lavatory.
9. Lavatory mirrors should not be higher than 100 cm above the floor.
10. Faucets easy to operate through lever, push or electronic mechanism, no handles.
11. Emergency call within disabled lavatory.