

Review of entry and assessment for RICS membership

Summary of recommendations

June 2024



Contents

Foreword	ii
1 Executive summary	1
Overarching recommendation	2
Appendix A Summary of recommendations	3
A1 Overarching recommendation	3
A2 Pathways and chartered titles	3
A3 Competencies	4
A4 Assessment	4
A5 Eligibility	4
A6 Education	5
A7 Fellowship	5

Foreword

Entry and assessment standards and processes for all grades of RICS membership are critical to ensuring public confidence in the profession.

Our responsibility to future surveyors, and the society that will benefit from their work, means that we must ensure the entry qualifications for RICS membership assesses the right skills, knowledge and behaviours to a rigorous and consistent standard.

This report is the culmination of an extensive review, including consultation and research with RICS members, candidates, employers and other stakeholders, overseen by the RICS Entry and Assessment Steering Group (EASG).

In this report, we set out the key findings and what we have heard from stakeholders. This report makes recommendations for transformative change across all aspects of RICS' assessment model and what it means to be a member of RICS.

We would like to thank everyone who has engaged with the review.

Sarah Hutchinson

Chair of the Entry and Assessment Steering Group

1 Executive summary

RICS must continue to uphold the highest professional standards in the public interest and be able to respond to increasing external scrutiny and regulation from governments across different jurisdictions. Oversight and requirements affecting the roles of surveying professionals is inevitable and is a clear challenge to RICS maintaining its role as a self-regulator.

The current RICS assessment model was introduced in the mid-1990s and has served RICS well. However, to remain fit for purpose, RICS assessments must evolve to keep pace with changes in current practice and legislation, and modern qualification and educational practices. Standards and assessments must be clearly articulated, consistent, fair and valid.

This review found the current model to be designed in a way that is vulnerable to subjectivity and not wholly conducive to diversity, equity and inclusion. The flexibility of the assessment, presenting candidates with a wide competency selection, can be confusing, and raises issues as to the consistency of the assessment.

Practical issues with assessment delivery exacerbate problems for RICS candidates, assessors and staff. RICS has always benefited from significant member engagement and a dedicated group of highly trained, expert RICS professionals volunteer their time as assessors. However, RICS' ongoing reliance on members and the growing demand for assessments is not sustainable. More recently, it has resulted in disruption and uncertainty for candidates.

Separately, eligibility for an RICS assessment is complex with different criteria to apply and a range of entry routes, especially for chartered membership.

There is a large pool of RICS Associate members who would like to progress to chartered status, frustrated at a lack of a viable route.

Furthermore, the review has identified a strength of support from members to prioritise and promote evolving topics such as innovation, sustainability and new technologies. This is both in terms of the competencies assessed and the assessment methods to ensure they embrace accessibility and encourage diversity and equity.

This report is structured across the topics of:

- pathways and chartered titles
- competencies
- assessment
- eligibility
- education

- fellowship
- other topics.

Each topic includes recommendations and there is a summary of these recommendations at [Appendix A](#).

The recommendations would support RICS in meeting the criteria to attain [UKAS ISO 17024](#) accreditation, a globally-recognised accreditation for certification of individuals, and/or [Ofqual](#) recognition.

This is important to ensure that RICS membership assessments retain the confidence of governments and external regulators, and it strengthens RICS' role as a self-regulating body. The current model, with the choice of optional competencies and different assessment approaches, makes this challenging.

Attaining status with either of these bodies would enhance UK and global internal and external assurance, providing further public confidence in RICS by demonstrating the highest standards in assessment design and delivery.

Overarching recommendation

RICS should introduce a progressive, modular assessment model, that includes the following.

- 1 A new competency framework with clearly defined learning outcomes and assessment criteria. This will provide explicit threshold benchmark statements of what a qualified chartered surveyor (MRICS/FRICS) and Associate member of RICS must know and be able to do in practice.
- 2 A range of pathways, recognising the variety of surveying disciplines. Pathways should set out the essential skills and attributes for each discipline, be developed by RICS member experts and should not over-specialise at the point of entry.
- 3 A progressive, modular approach to assessment, including a range of assessment methods, to ensure consistent, accessible, fair and valid assessment outcomes.
- 4 A clear and inclusive single point of entry. Every candidate should be able to access the RICS assessment. Eligibility exemptions should be given in recognition of relevant industry experience and/or prior learning, including for holders of an RICS-accredited degree.

Appendix A Summary of recommendations

A1 Overarching recommendation

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A2 Pathways and chartered titles

- 1 In recognition of the breadth of surveying disciplines, most pathways should be retained except for Infrastructure, Taxation allowances, and Valuation of businesses and intangible assets. A mechanism to recognise expertise in each of these domains should be retained, possibly through the introduction of other programmes of learning and/or post-chartered surveyor assessments.
- 2 Pathways should be simplified, setting out the essential skills and attributes for each surveying discipline, and developed by RICS member experts. Optional competencies should be kept to the minimum and only included where appropriate.
- 3 Pathways should not overly specialise at the point of entry. Specialist areas in pathways are removed at the point of entry to chartered or Associate membership with further consideration being given to developing post-qualification credentials (e.g. as higher or further qualifications or as compulsory CPD for specialists).
- 4 No new pathways should be added to the framework at this time.

- 5 The link between pathways and additional chartered titles should be simplified and aligned. This would include creating the following additional chartered titles:
 - Chartered Corporate Real Estate Surveyor
 - Chartered Property Finance and Investment Surveyor
 - Chartered Residential Surveyor
 - Chartered Rural Surveyor

A3 Competencies

- 1 All competencies – mandatory and technical – should be reviewed and redefined by RICS member experts, under one overarching framework for chartered and Associate candidates.
- 2 All competencies should be clearly articulated with explicit reference to what a chartered surveyor and Associate member must know and do for each surveying discipline.
- 3 All competencies – mandatory and technical – must reflect current practice and evolve to meet future industry requirements.
- 4 There should be greater emphasis on sustainability within the redesign of pathways and competencies to ensure that sustainability issues, including climate change, are assessed to the required level in each pathway.

A4 Assessment

- 1 RICS should introduce a new progressive, modular assessment, including a range of assessment methods, to ensure consistent, accessible, fair and valid assessment outcomes.
- 2 RICS should explore working with an assessment design, development and delivery partner(s) with expertise to achieve an efficient and scalable model in the design and delivery of assessments. This will require the support and involvement from members who contribute to the current assessment and quality assurance processes.
- 3 RICS should ensure the design of any new model is developed with a view to achieving accreditation and recognition status with an external regulatory body.

A5 Eligibility

- 1 RICS should develop a clear and inclusive single point of entry. Every candidate should be able to access the RICS assessment. Eligibility exemptions should be given in recognition of relevant industry experience and/or prior learning, including for holders of an RICS-accredited degree.

A6 Education

- 1 Accredited partnerships and apprenticeships must continue to have a role in future routes to entry.
- 2 RICS accreditation must have tangible benefits for university partners. The RICS Education and Accreditation functions should introduce a multi-year plan to embrace partnership working with accredited partners ensuring all parties derive the value of working in partnership.
- 3 RICS-accreditation must be based on a rigorous set of criteria and requirements, including relevance to industry and supporting the pipeline of future professionals.
- 4 RICS should develop a new coordinated education strategy that ensures learners are supported and new qualifying requirements are:
 - embedded into accredited programmes
 - aligned with apprenticeship standards through collaboration with IfATE's Trailblazer groups and other stakeholders.

A7 Fellowship

- 1 RICS should review the current FRICS assessment and introduce a new, robust assessment with clear criteria for admission, balancing senior requirements, achievements and contribution to the Institution.
- 2 RICS should do more to clearly articulate the benefits and value of Fellowship.
- 3 RICS Governing Council should consider an amendment to Bye-Law 2.2.4, which prevents members from transferring from FRICS to MRICS, if it deems such an amendment appropriate.

Delivering confidence

We are RICS. As a member-led chartered professional body working in the public interest, we uphold the highest technical and ethical standards.

We inspire professionalism, advance knowledge and support our members across global markets to make an effective contribution for the benefit of society. We independently regulate our members in the management of land, real estate, construction and infrastructure. Our work with others supports their professional practice and pioneers a natural and built environment that is sustainable, resilient and inclusive for all.

Entry and assessment review project team
entryandassessreview@rics.org

General enquiries
contactrics@rics.org

Candidate support
candidatesupport@rics.org



[rics.org](https://www.rics.org)