Assessor guide

February 2024

APC assessor guide

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Introduction

This guide has been written for all APC assessors who have completed RICS assessor training.

It will help you:

- understand the ideas behind the APC and the stages that lead to the final assessment
- understand the approach to interviewing
- manage the preparation process and understand the various documents
- take part in the assessment process
- carry out post-interview assessment procedures and decide whether candidates should pass or be referred.

This acts as a support document for your training and for future reference each and every time you act as an APC assessor.

1 APC explained

Pathways and competencies

The RICS qualification covers many different professional disciplines in land, property and construction. RICS has identified competencies required for each of these disciplines – these groupings of competencies are known as pathways.

There is a guide for each pathway, which explains the competencies in detail and in context – visit [Sector pathways].

Competencies

A competency is a statement of the capabilities required to perform a specific role. RICS competencies are defined at three levels.

Level 1 – knowledge and understanding

Level 2 – application of knowledge and understanding

Level 3 – reasoned advice and depth of knowledge.

Each pathway is made up of three types of competency:

Mandatory – personal, interpersonal and business skills common to all pathways.

Core – Compulsory and relate to the primary technical skills of the chosen pathway.

Optional competencies – selected from the list of technical skills for the chosen pathway.

Entry requirements

RICS recognises that a mix of academic/professional qualifications with relevant experience can provide the skills and levels of competence required to become a chartered surveyor. The eligibility requirements to begin the APC are:

- RICS accredited degree – At least 24 months' structured training and a minimum of 96 hours' continuing professional development (CPD).
- RICS accredited degree with a minimum of five years' relevant experience – At least 12 months' structured training and a minimum of 48 hours' continuing professional development (CPD).
- RICS accredited degree with a minimum of 10 years' relevant experience – Demonstrate a minimum of 48 hours' continuing professional development (CPD) over the preceding 12 months. No structured training period required.
- Bachelor degree (or membership of a RICS approved professional body) with a minimum of five years' relevant experience (at least 12 months must be post qualification) – Successfully complete the preliminary review and a minimum of 48 hours' continuing professional development (CPD).

This guide explains how you should prepare for and conduct the final assessment interview to reach a decision on each candidate.

Standards of assessment

The purpose of the assessment is to ensure that knowledge and understanding, gained through a combination of qualifications, experience and training, are applied in practice and measured consistently internationally. This demonstrates to all stakeholders that only those with the agreed level of competence become RICS chartered professionals (MRICS).

All APC candidates will follow the same process and attend the final assessment interview.

Variations

To ensure a fair assessment you must always take into account the local practice and norms of the country in which the candidate practises, while remembering the high standards of RICS qualifications. Relevant experience can be gained in a variety of countries; all relevant experience is valid and should be considered during assessment. Candidates are required to have an understanding of the local legislation and practice for the country they are practising and being assessed in. You also need to consider significant differences in experience and job role responsibilities.

Ultimately it will be up to you and the other assessors to judge what level of questioning is appropriate and the answers you will need to receive to be satisfied that each candidate has met the competency requirements for the chosen pathway.

Candidate profiles

Candidates following a structured training programme

RICS accredited degree + up to five years' relevant experience

RICS accredited degree + five to ten years' relevant experience

The structured training period gives candidates the experience to achieve the competencies. Throughout the structured training candidates are supported by a supervisor/counsellor who mentors candidates, guides them through their training and monitors their progress.

Candidates record their progress throughout the structured training. Their records will show:

- the number of days' experience they have completed against each of the competencies
- the work/tasks they have performed
- the competencies they have achieved.

Structured training does not have to be a continuous period and is valid for up to five years from the date the candidate applies for their assessment.

Candidates will not be able to apply for the final assessment interview until their supervisor/counsellor certify that, in their opinion, they have reached the level of competence required and have fulfilled the minimum training period. However, candidates will not necessarily achieve the required level of competence within the minimum training period.

Candidates undertaking preliminary review

Bachelor's degree + minimum five years' relevant experience – at least 12 months must be post qualification

RICS approved professional body membership + minimum five years' relevant experience – at least 12 months must be post qualification

These candidates do not need to complete structured training. They must undertake a preliminary review where their submissions will be read and reviewed by trained professionals.

The purpose of the preliminary review is to ensure that candidates understand how the submissions are used as part of the final assessment and that their submissions meet the requirements for final assessment.

The feedback report is designed to identify if candidates have met the submission requirements and to provide advice if elements of the submission can be improved. Therefore, all stakeholders can be confident that only candidates who have met the submission requirements proceed to final assessment.

All preliminary review candidates will follow the same process and if approved will attend the final assessment.

At preliminary review, the question to be answered is: Is the submission suitable for the APC assessors to prepare for and conduct the final assessment interview effectively?
In summary, the objective of the review is to determine if the candidate is ready to proceed to final assessment because the preliminary review is based on the candidate's submission only; the review does not form part of the final assessment interview.

Candidates who have an RICS-accredited degree and over ten years' experience may proceed to final assessment directly once they have been signed off as ready for assessment by their counsellor. Candidates are not required to complete a preliminary review but may apply for one if they wish.

2 Interview guidance

RICS has one standard required to qualify as a chartered surveyor through the APC, irrespective of the candidates' profiles. The assessment standard, technical and professional requirements and structure of the interview remain the same. You must interview all APC candidates following the same procedure assessing against the same standard of competence and professionalism, to ensure a fair and consistent assessment for all.

Procedure

The interview panel will normally be made up of three assessors (minimum two), one of who will act as the chairperson. All assessors have equal responsibility for the interview.

Role of the chairperson

The chairperson's role is vital to a successful interview. They are responsible for supervising
the final assessment process, which includes:

- initiating pre-interview discussions
- agreeing the structure of the interview and who will be questioning on each competency
- managing the questioning
- controlling timing
- initiating the decision-making process after the interview
- ensuring all assessors adhere to the assessment policies
- writing the referral report (if necessary).

Each assessor will be involved in every element and will assist the chairperson in performing these responsibilities.

The chairperson's guide provides more detail on the role.

RICS Assessment Platform

As online tool where candidates manage their assessment details, CPD and selected competency records, and prepare their submission for assessment.

As an assessor, you will access the platform to provide your availability to assess and to download candidate submissions and details of each assessment panel you are assigned to. A short video guide about using the platform is available at the Assessments information web page.

Pre-interview preparation

The chairperson will make contact with you before the final assessment day to arrange a time for you to discuss the candidate as a panel.

You must commit the necessary amount of time to prepare for each interview to ensure you:

- have read the submissions
- understand the candidate's background and experience
- are familiar with the candidate's declared competencies
- understand the assessment process to ensure the delivery of a professional and competent assessment.

On receipt of the submissions, you must check that the documents comply with the requirements. Staff will have performed a basic check against the requirements but will not have read the submissions; you must check that the submissions are suitable for you to assess the candidate at the interview. You are not judging whether the submissions are good or bad; you are only determining if there are errors or omissions. Key areas to check are:

- the correct number and level of technical and mandatory competencies are declared
- the written submissions are complete
- the appropriate amount and type of professional development is recorded.

If the documents are deficient you must contact the chairperson who is responsible for informing RICS. RICS will decide what action to take; this could include the interview being deferred.

The pre-interview preparation is a mandatory requirement for all assessment panels. If a panel discussion has not been arranged you should contact the chairperson or your RICS staff contact.

Conflicts of interest

All RICS members are bound by their professional ethics to ensure the credibility of the final assessment process. In particular, it is important that potential conflicts of interest between assessors and candidates are properly identified and managed.

A conflict of interest arises, in the context of final assessment, where a chairman or assessor is privy to certain information or interests which could influence, or could be perceived as influencing, their decisions in relation to a candidate.

'Influences' could include friendships, loyalties to a firm, or loyalties to fellow members of an organisation. Factors of influence could include the possibility of financial gain or other advantages, whether to the individual panel member or to a person or organisation they are connected with.

There is no definitive list of situations where a conflict would arise.

The following is only to illustrate relationships that could give rise to conflict:

- friend, neighbour, acquaintance or friends in common
- any family relationship (even remote)
- colleague past or present
- client or competitor
- does business with you or your firm.

Example questions to ask yourself:

- Do I or my firm have an ongoing commercial relationship with the candidate or their firm?
- Has there been any conflict between our firms or the candidate in the past, regarding services provided, or financial charges?
- Could the outcome of the assessment positively/negatively affect the assessors' business interests?

'Personal' versus 'prejudicial' distinctions

There is a distinction between personal interests and prejudicial interests.

'Personal' interests: in certain circumstances, there may be a connection between the assessor, and the candidate, but this may not present an issue to the candidate in practice. For instance, the individuals may have met at a CPD event or know of one another in a professional capacity.

'Prejudicial' interests: where the assessor either stands to benefit from the outcome of an assessment interview or might otherwise be perceived as being influenced, the assessor must declare the conflict and should recuse themselves from the panel, at the earliest opportunity (so that the panel can be reconstituted).

Before the final assessment interview

- RICS uses all reasonable endeavours to identify and avoid any obvious conflicts of interest, when selecting a panel of assessors, prior to the interview going ahead.
- Once in receipt of the candidate's final assessment documentation the chairperson and assessors should further ensure that they do not have a conflict of interest and if so declare it to RICS, who will decide whether the panel needs to change or is okay to proceed.

If you think a conflict of interest might exist you should declare this immediately and in advance of the interview.

You should contact your chairperson and explain the circumstances fully. Together you need to decide whether the personal interest is 'prejudicial'. Could the interest affect your judgement? Would a member of the public reasonably think it could? If it is decided that the personal interest is not prejudicial, the interview can go ahead.

If it is decided that the personal interest is prejudicial, alternative arrangements will be made. The chairperson must inform the RICS team as soon as possible so an alternative assessor can be assigned. If it is the chairperson who has the personal interest, the other assessors should decide whether the interest is prejudicial. If they think it is, or if they cannot agree, the interview should not go ahead. Contact RICS for support and alternative arrangements will be made.

On the final assessment interview day

In the unlikely event a candidate or panel member does consider there is a conflict of interest, the chairperson should decide whether the interview should go ahead with the panel member in question OR whether the panel member should sit out of the interview. If this is only a two-personal panel and a conflict is raised on the day of the interview, then the interview will need to be deferred and rescheduled for another date.

Whenever a potential conflict of interest arises please contact your local RICS office, so they can advise you.

Candidate submissions

The written submission will provide detail on the candidate's experience, project work and CPD. When preparing for the interview, you should

- refer to the pathway guide to refresh your memory about the requirements for the candidate's declared competencies
- review the candidate's submissions and make notes about their apparent strengths and weaknesses
- plan questions around the candidate's documented experience and relate it back to the declared competencies.

Qualification and employment information

This will add to your appreciation of the candidate's training and experience. You may be familiar with the candidate's employer(s) and this will add to your knowledge and understanding of the candidate's career and help you to ensure there are no conflicts of interest for you in interviewing the candidate.

Summary of experience

The summary of experience is an overview of the candidate's declared competencies and attainment levels as agreed with their supervisor/counsellor. It is made up of a series of statements against each of the technical and mandatory competencies. This shows you the knowledge and activities that the candidate has undertaken to demonstrate competence.

In addition to showing the candidate's abilities and experience in the individual competencies, it provides examples of the work they have completed against each competency.

This allows you to build your questions for the candidate and these are the examples you must use to assess against. Remember you can only assess against the candidate's stated experience and claimed competencies.

The summary of experience is 1,500 words in total for the mandatory competencies and maximum 4,000 words in total for the technical competencies.

RICS is looking for evidence that the candidate can do the relevant job at the required level. This information will be your main point of reference for questions during the interview.

You should not expect a candidate undertaking structured training to be able to demonstrate the level of knowledge and experience equivalent to that of an experienced practitioner. Your judgement should be based on the candidate having demonstrated competence to the level required, and having fulfilled the assessment criteria.

Case study

This is a written report that gives a detailed analysis of a project(s) with which the candidate has been personally involved. It should be maximum 3,000 words. The objective is to allow the candidate to demonstrate their problem solving abilities and standard of professional and technical knowledge. The conclusion must contain an evaluation of the outcome and also reflection on the experience gained and the lessons learnt.

The case study has two important aspects:

- it adds to your knowledge of the candidate
- it will form the basis for the start of the interview: the candidate's presentation and your first ten minutes of questioning will be based on it.

You should consider the following:

- Is the candidate's contribution to the project evident?
- Has the candidate identified the key issues?
- Have the options been considered and have good reasons been given for those options that were rejected?
- Are the chosen solutions supported by reasoned judgement and has the candidate demonstrated problem-solving skills?
- Does the conclusion contain an evaluation and an understanding of the lessons learned?
- Has the candidate demonstrated good written communication skills?
- Are you satisfied that the report demonstrates at least one of the competencies required to level 3?

You will start forming a view at an early stage; however, you must not decide whether the case study is a pass or refer before you have interviewed the candidate. This is one element of the assessment and you must make a judgement in a holistic manner considering all elements together.

Logbook

For candidates undertaking a period of structured training, their submission will include a logbook. The logbook shows the number of days spent accruing experience against each of their declared competencies.

While level 1 may not be practical experience, candidates are permitted to record level 1 in their logbook - it is valuable learning that they will able to apply in practice and may have been gained in formal education and/or formal training in the workplace or on-the job experience.

Level 1 knowledge provides assessors with good evidence of understanding, but it is important candidates ensure their structured training period reflects mainly level 2 (the application of the knowledge and understanding you have gained) and level 3 (providing reasoned advice and depth of knowledge).

There is no specified number of days candidates should record against each level; this is a judgement for the candidate, their counsellor and supervisor (if appointed).

Continuing professional development (CPD)

All candidates are required to complete CPD. Candidates following a structured training programme must complete a minimum of 48 hours per 12 months of structured training and all other candidates need to demonstrate a minimum of 48 hours in the 12 months prior to final assessment. This information adds to your understanding of the candidate's training and experience and will give you ideas for areas of questioning in the interview.

The CPD must be split between formal development such as professional courses, seminars or online events and informal development such as private study or on the job training. At least 50% of the CPD undertaken must be dedicated to formal development.

Those on a part-time or distance learning accredited degree can use the final year as counting towards their CPD for that year but this should be supplemented by other CPD activities for that year.

Interview structure

The interview will take place using video calling technology approved by RICS. Instructions on using the technology, including a tutorial and demonstration, are available separately.

It is essential that all interviews, while having some flexibility, are broadly structured the same. This will allow you to focus on the assessment and ensure each candidate has similar time allocated to the individual elements of the interview. Any deviation may give rise to an appeal if the candidate is referred.

As a guide, the interview follows the structure in the table opposite.

When the candidate joins the video call the chairperson will welcome them, make some introductions and check that everything is set up appropriately before the interview officially starts.

When everything is ready the chairperson will ask the candidate to start their presentation. At this point, the one-hour time limit for the interview starts.

A 60-minute interview cannot cover the full extent of the candidate's experience. The panel must cover as many of the competencies as possible within the allocated time.

The interview must be held in a private and appropriate location.

RICS staff or the assessment panel reserve the right to cancel the interview if this is not case. For example, interviews conducted in any form of transport, or location that may hinder the professionalism of the interview process.

You should contact RICS if you require any assistance.

Candidate's presentation on case study	10 minutes
Questions on the presentation	10 minutes
Discussion on overall experience including CPD, technical competencies, Rules of Conduct and professional practice	30 minutes
Chairperson's areas of questioning may include professional and technical matters, CPD, Rules of Conduct, mandatory competencies; and close of the interview	10 minutes
Total	60 minutes

Time management

The chairperson is responsible for managing the timings of the interview. If the interview is interrupted due to technology or other unforeseen issues the chairperson will extend the time of the interview accordingly to ensure the full 60 minutes is achieved as allocated. Any extension to achieve the full 60 minutes is at the sole discretion of the chairperson, who has been trained to manage the interview timing and determine what accounts for an interruption.

With the exception of the above, you must not give the candidate either a longer or shorter interview. Making the interview less than 60 minutes could give the wrong signal. The candidate may assume they have been successful or feel that they weren't given the opportunity to show their full experience/ competence.

If the candidate is referred they could appeal on the grounds that in the additional time they would have had the opportunity to address any issues that led to the referral decision.

If the interview exceeds 60 minutes and a candidate is referred, they could appeal on the grounds that they were subjected to more testing than other candidates. Even where you feel that an extension in time would benefit the candidate you must not exceed 60 minutes.

The only circumstances in which an interview can exceed the 60 minutes is where a reasonable adjustment has been agreed. See the equal opportunities section in this guide for more details.

Audit and quality assurance

We are committed to ensuring rigorous processes for the chartered qualification (MRICS) so that employers, clients and the public can have confidence that anyone achieving it, is competent to practise as a chartered surveyor.

Use of video and microphone

The candidate must have their video and microphone on throughout the video call so the assessment panel can be assured they do not have access to any support that provides, or could be perceived as providing, them with an advantage during the interview.

Before the interview starts the chairperson will ask the candidate to complete a 360-pan of their surroundings, including the area above them and desktop/floor area in front of them. The chairperson can request repeats of this procedure at any time during the interview or before the video call ends.

Staff facilitator role

An RICS staff member trained to perform the staff facilitator role may be present on the video call. The purpose of the staff facilitator is to support the panel and candidate with the use of the video call technology. They will not participate in the interview or any pre- or post-interview discussions with the panel. Their video will be off and microphone muted for the duration of the video call unless there is a technology issue or any other unforeseen issue that requires them to intervene. Any intervention by the staff facilitator would be recorded as an approved interruption by the chairperson.

Auditor role

An auditor trained by RICS may be present on the video call. The purpose of the auditor is to observe the performance of the assessment panel, ensuring the process and policies for the assessment are being followed. They will not participate in the interview or any pre- or post-interview discussions about the candidate; their role is simply to observe.

They will use their video and microphone to introduce themselves before the interview starts; their video will be off and microphone muted for the duration of the interview unless they are instructed otherwise by the chairperson or staff facilitator.

You should be prepared to share your assessment preparation work with them. At the end of the post-interview discussion the auditor will provide you with feedback. They are there to help and advise as well as provide quality assurance of the assessments. The auditor report will also be used if the candidate appeals the result of their assessment.

Recording assessments

RICS may audio or video record the assessment. This will be used solely for the purpose of assessor standardisation and training.

If the interview is going to be recorded, you will be given prior notice by RICS. Interviews may not be recorded by the candidates.

Questioning techniques

Your most important skill will be your questioning technique. The outcome of the interview can depend on the way you ask questions. The skills you develop, and your style of delivery, will affect the quality of the information you obtain.

Your aim is primarily to help candidates demonstrate their competence successfully. You must give them every opportunity to answer fully and professionally.

Questioning at the competency levels

Think in terms of three progressive levels of questioning.

- Level 1 tests the candidate's knowledge and understanding of principles and theory.
- Level 2 tests how the candidate has applied the knowledge by providing specific examples.
- Level 3 tests the candidate's reasoned judgement and ability to provide professional and sound advice, against the full extent of their ability and knowledge.

Remember – the candidate can select the level of some of the competencies. It is important that you do not question beyond that level. You are assessing them against their declared competencies and competency levels.

Examples of competence-based questioning

You must ask open questions. For example:

- How did you go about the process?
- What process/procedures did you adopt?
- What problems did you encounter?
- How did you solve them?
- What was the outcome?
- What did you learn?
- What did not go well?
- What would you do differently?
- How would you apply this knowledge?
- How would you apply what you have learned to … ?
- What if a situation arose where … ?
- Give me an example …
- Tell me about your experience in …
- What was your role/involvement?

Occasionally you may ask closed questions that require only a yes/no answer and are used to confirm facts. For example:

- Can I just clarify that you said … ?
- So, you used the … method?

Best practice

- Be alert throughout the interview – even when you are not asking the questions.
- Ask open questions; use closed questions only to confirm information given.
- Be flexible with your questioning; be prepared to follow up the candidate's answers with further questions before moving on to the next topic.
- Ensure your questions are well phrased, clear and concise.
- Be objective but look out for the areas of deficiency as you should focus more on these.
- Ask one question at a time and use short questions.
- Make allowances if the candidate is nervous: use encouraging follow-up questions to overcome any problems.
- Listen carefully to the candidate's presentation as it also provides a source of questions.
- Avoid affirmations – responding with 'yes' or 'no' or making gestures in this manner can indicate to the candidate that their answer is right or wrong and may cause the candidate to be distracted.

Finally, before you ask the candidate a question, make sure you know which competency it relates to, and which level. Always open the question by referencing the competency you are questioing on, for example "in relation to … competency …" You should also be aware of answers you could expect and would be satisfactory.

Mandatory competencies

Candidates must achieve the following minimum standards for the mandatory competencies.

To level 3	Ethics, rules of conduct and professionalism
To level 2	Client care
	Communication and negotiation
	Health and safety
To level 1	Accounting principles and procedures
	Business planning
	Conflict avoidance, management and dispute resolution procedures
	Data management
	Diversity, inclusion and teamworking
	Inclusive environments
	Sustainability

Questions on technical competencies will often address the mandatory competencies too. Be aware of this and record the responses against both technical and mandatory competencies if relevant. For example, every question will test the candidate's communication skills. Similarly ethical issues could be linked to technical or business issues covered throughout the interview.

Ethics, rules of conduct and professionalism

This competency must be tested to a greater extent. It is the only mandatory competency required to level 3.

Candidates must be aware of and act in accordance with RICS Rules of Conduct, act with professional integrity and objectivity, and recognise their duties to clients, employers and the community.

RICS has professional and ethical standards designed to provide help and guidance to members in every situation. You must be familiar with them. For more information visit RICS Regulation.

When considering this competency, you may find evidence in the submissions and presentation. You should look for opportunities to question the candidate on ethical issues throughout the interview. In addition the chairperson must dedicate time to ask specific questions on a number of related issues.

There are many issues that can be covered, for example conflicts of interest or bribery, but you must take account of practice in the country concerned when framing your questions.

In addition, you should ask some questions about issues of current concern to the profession.

All candidates are required to successfully complete the RICS professionalism (ethics) module in the 12 months prior to their application for final assessment.

The assessment version of the module includes four units:

Module 1: Introduction to ethics and professionalism

Module 2: The RICS Rules of Conduct, integrity and professional codes of ethics

Module 3: Ethical topics and considerations

Module 4: Choose your own adventure case study.

The module is assessed via a further 'complex' case study and a multiple choice question test.

Ethics and the rules of conduct must still be assessed as part of the final assessment interview.

As an RICS assessor, you must also successfully complete the module every three years. This can count towards your requirement as an RICS member to undertake three hours' CPD related to ethics every three years.

Continuing professional development (CPD)

You can question the candidate on their CPD activities. You may wish to use this as a focal point for questions on the mandatory competencies too.

Note-taking

You must make notes. Without good notes there is a risk you will base your final judgement on what you remember you particularly liked or disliked. Brief notes on the questions asked and the candidate's response should be sufficient to act as a reminder at the end of the interview. Avoid obvious marking systems that may be visible to the candidate or the other panel assessors.

Remember your notes will help you and your chairperson if you have to write a referral report or an appeal is logged by the candidate. Your fellow assessors should take notes when you are asking questions and vice versa. When taking your notes, remember to keep eye contact with the candidate as much as possible.

Interview conduct

The way you conduct yourself in an interview will have an impact on the candidate and the quality of the interview. Showing attention and interest will encourage the candidate and help calm nerves.

Questions must relate directly to the candidate's training and experience, it will show the candidate that you are prepared. Eye contact and the occasional acknowledgement are encouraging. Address the candidate by name from time to time.

Be aware of your body language. Voice projection is also important. Your tone needs to be encouraging and the pace should enable the candidate to follow and understand your questions.

Listening skills are vital; first to ensure that you interpret the candidate's responses correctly and second to help you develop your supplementary questions. Never enter into a debate with the candidate or the other assessors. Do not give any indication of how well or badly the interview is going.

Be aware of possible distractions. Ensure, for example, that all mobile phones are turned off.

Post-interview assessment

After the candidate has left the video call, the chairperson will ask you to take a few minutes to reflect on the interview. Note your thoughts and comments on the candidate's performance on the assessment marksheet. The chairperson will do the same.

Holistic Criteria

Review the evidence and take a holistic approach; consider whether:

- the candidate's spread and balance of experience is satisfactory
- the candidate has achieved the required number of competencies to the correct levels
- the candidate has the required level of written and oral communication skills.

Common faults, which may influence the outcome, include the following:

- the submissions are not presented in the required format, greatly exceed the word count or contain significant technical or professional errors
- the presentation does not reflect the candidate's written submissions
- the candidate's communication, documentation or attitude is not professional
- the candidate is unable to demonstrate knowledge or experience relating to the declared competencies. This could be deficiency in just one competency or a range of competencies.

You must refer the candidate if they fail to demonstrate the required competence on Ethics, Rules of Conduct and professionalism.

Approach

Your judgement should be based on whether the candidate has demonstrated competence to the level required. You must base your decision on the required levels; do not expect a level of knowledge equal to your own.

You must take into account all elements of the assessment including the candidate's answers to the questions, presentation and the submissions.

Use your discretion. The decision must be made on balance. For example, you would not normally refer a candidate if they have shown a deficiency in only one optional competency required to level 1.

Weighting

Attach the greatest importance to the candidate's competence as tested by questioning.

Give considerable importance to the presentation. It is a significant indicator of how well the candidate demonstrates professionalism and makes an impression; remember communication is one of the mandatory competencies.

Finally, the submissions. Although they are important and must satisfy the requirements, they are the starting point for the interview. A good interview could overcome weaker submissions.

However, badly presented submissions and errors could give you serious concerns about the quality of a candidate's professional reports in working practice. In this instance if the interview is outstanding it will weigh up against the weak submissions.

Marksheet

The marksheet is a management tool that has been developed to help you arrive at a decision. Please use it to ensure consistency in the process.

Outcome

The chairperson will lead a discussion, seeking each assessor's views. It should cover all aspects of assessment but with particular reference to the competencies. The marking process should show whether the candidate has reached the required levels.

Consensus decisions are best. However, they are not always possible. In a three-person panel, the decision will be by majority. Even if the chairperson is in the minority, they must accept the decision. In a two-person panel, if agreement cannot be reached the assessment must be declared null and void and RICS will notify the candidate and arrange a new assessment.

If you are conducting several interviews and you cannot reach agreement in the time between interviews, you must make a decision before the end of the day.

Referred candidates

Referral reports

While it is the chairperson who writes the referral report, it needs to be agreed by the full panel. You should jointly decide why a particular competency has not been achieved and what further advice should be given to the candidate.

The report should focus on the candidate's competency deficiency. You need to provide constructive comments that clearly state the deficiencies and how to rectify them. The comments should encourage candidates to apply for final assessment again. When referring candidates, you are not refusing access to the RICS qualification but are advising candidates on how they can improve in order to achieve the RICS qualification.

Whatever the main focus of the referral report, the chairperson should cover all aspects that led to the decision, however minor they may seem, to provide thorough guidance for the candidate's development.

> Focus only on a candidate's deficiencies. If you are satisfied that a competency has been achieved, you should not mention it in your report. Future panels can be compromised if you do.

You may also wish to give positive reinforcement that is not specific to a competency. For example, you could comment on the candidate's presentation or confidence during the interview.

The report must:

- identify the reasons for the referral – the reasons should be factual, accurate, simply expressed and linked to the competencies
- contain enough information to support the referral, with comments and guidance where necessary
- use short sentences and paragraphs
- be personal to the reader ('you have been referred')
- do not use jargon
- recommend further experience or study that the candidate should be able to identify and achieve.

Previously referred candidates

The submission requirements for previously referred candidates are the same as for new candidates.

You will not be notified if candidates have previously been referred. You should conduct the interview in the same manner as for new candidates.

Equal opportunities

RICS is committed to equal opportunities. You must:

- Check for conflicts of interest in the submissions. Discuss any potential issues with the chairperson. RICS staff can provide additional guidance.
- Keep a record of the interview.
- Ensure you keep carefully to the timings for the interview so that candidates have a consistent interview experience.
- Link questions to the candidate's training and experience and the mandatory and technical competencies.
- Always give the candidate the last word and explain at the outset that this will happen.
- Always take account of and make allowances for any disability that affects the candidate's performance at interview. RICS will provide you with specific guidance when the candidate has declared a disability.

Access arrangements
RICS makes every effort to protect applicants from discrimination in accordance with the UK *Equality Act* 2010 (the Act) and is committed to equality of opportunity.

Reasonable adjustments: When applying for an assessment, RICS must consider requests for a reasonable adjustment where a candidate, who is disabled as defined by the Act, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled.

A reasonable adjustment must be based on the individual needs of the applicant and their ability to access an assessment.
To apply for a reasonable adjustment, you should first refer to the *Access Arrangements: Reasonable Adjustments* policy.

If this is relevant to your circumstances, please choose the option to apply for an adjustment in the Assessment Platform.

Special consideration: defined as a consideration given to an applicant who has temporarily experienced a significant personal difficulty **at the point of taking an assessment**.

To apply for a special consideration, you should first refer to the *Access Arrangements: Special Considerations* policy before sending your request to the RICS Assessment Delivery team at adjustments@rics.org

For further information, see:
Access arrangements.

Chairpersons should handle the opening of the interview with great care and make sure the candidate's nerves are settled before the presentation. Chairpersons should always ensure at the start that the candidate is 'fit, well and ready to proceed'.

Before the interview starts, the chairperson must ask the candidate if they are fit and well to proceed.

There may be very rare occasions where a candidate confirms they are fit and well, but then experiences some type of medical event/ issue during the interview.

The panel has a duty of care towards the candidate and may, at their discretion, end the interview at any time on the grounds of health concerns even if the candidate feels well enough to proceed.

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.

General enquiries
contactrics@rics.org

Candidate support
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