SENIOR PROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENT

RICS

Assessor guide

February 2024

Assessor guide

Published by: RICS, Parliament Square, London SW1P 3AD.

Introduction

The senior professional assessment involves five stages:

1. Eligibility – applicants must meet the qualification and experience requirements
2. Vetting – an initial application will be reviewed to confirm the applicant has a suitable profile for the assessment
3. Ethics, RICS Rules of Conduct, and professionalism – all applicants complete the RICS professionalism module and test.
4. Submission – applicants provide evidence of their experience for you to prepare for the final assessment interview
5. Final assessment interview – applicants are assessed to determine if they are competent to practise as an RICS chartered professional.

Your role as an assessor will begin at the submission stage. This guide will explain the approach you must take to assess senior professional assessment applicants.

RICS Assessment Platform

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

As an assessor you will access to the Platform to provide your availability to assess, 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.

1 Eligibility

Applicants must have ten years' relevant experience. This is reduced to five years if they have an undergraduate degree (or equivalent professional qualification) and a relevant post-graduate degree (master's level or higher).

Senior profile

The definition, indicators and behaviours are designed to allow applicants to demonstrate their senior profile.

Definition

An individual with advanced responsibilities who is recognised for their impact and career progression within the profession.

Indicators

Applicants must be able to demonstrate their responsibility for:

- leadership
- managing people (level, numbers)
- managing resources (extent, amount, type)

In addition, the following elements of their career may indicate their seniority:

- position in the organisation structure
- decision making (level, impact)
- international dimension
- client base (type, profile)
- recognition from peers, media, professional bodies, or industry stakeholders

Note: This list is not exhaustive. Applicants may identify other indicators relevant to their career.

Behaviours

With their senior profile applicants should be able to demonstrate how they:

- pursue opportunities to develop the industry and profession
- advocate best practice standards
- take responsibility to deliver professionalism
- act with integrity to promote responsible business.

Note: They are required to demonstrate at least one behaviour.

RICS pathway and competencies

In addition to the experience and senior profile requirements, applicants must demonstrate they are working within an RICS pathway and can provide evidence of the required competencies.

Senior professional competencies

Applicants are also required to demonstrate three senior professional competencies to Level 2. Full guidance on these competencies are on the next page.

All applicants 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.

Senior professional competencies

Competency	Level 1	Level 2
Leadership This competency covers the characteristics and behaviour of leaders. Applicants should be aware of the alternative styles of leadership and motivation. Applicants should have an understanding of how these techniques can be applied in their area of practice.	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the characteristics and behaviour of a leader. Examples of knowledge comprised within this level are: • The different styles of leadership • The different motivation theories • Effective organisational design and communication strategies • The climate necessary for the creation of high performing teams.	Provide evidence of application of your role as a leader appropriate to your area of practice. Examples of activities and knowledge comprised within this level are: • How leadership and motivation theories can be applied in practice • How organisational design and communication strategies can affect leadership • The ingredients necessary to create high performing teams.
Managing people This competency covers the principles and practice of managing people. Applicants should be aware of the skills required to manage people. Applicants should have an understanding of the appropriate application of these skills.	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the principles and practice of managing people. Examples of activities and knowledge comprised within this level are: • Human resource management legislation and techniques • Effective organisational design and communication strategies • The climate and culture necessary for the creation of high performing teams.	Provide evidence of the application of the skills required to manage people. Examples of activities and knowledge comprised within this level are: • The principles of human resource legislation • Applying human resource techniques • Effecting improved human resource performance • How use of effective organisational design and communication strategies improves human resource performance • How climate and culture affect human resource performance.
Managing resources This competency is about managing the effective use, allocation and costing of resources (not including human resources).	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the resources required and their cost for the effective operation of a business. Examples of knowledge comprised within this level are: • Types of resources required • How to manage financial resources • Accounting techniques • Budgeting techniques • Forecasting techniques • Methods for obtaining resources and monitoring their use • Personal resource management • Costing of resources • Relationship between cost and value of resources.	Provide evidence of the application in your area of practice, giving reasoned advice on the most effective use, allocation and cost of resources. Examples of activities and knowledge comprised within this level are: • Setting financial objectives • Constructing a budget • Monitoring and managing financial resources • Setting personal objectives • Preparing reports and recommendations for the use and allocation of resources.

2 Submission

You will have the following information on which to base the interview.

Application details

The application details include:

- qualifications
- professional body memberships (if any)
- employment history
- statement on senior profile
- organisation chart or description of the organisation structure (in context of applicant's role).

This will provide you with an overview of the type and level of work the applicant does.

Declared competencies

A list of the competencies and levels the applicant has selected – you should assess only against this. It will allow you to begin to identify areas of questioning.

Record of continuing professional development (CPD)

The record of CPD will add to your understanding of the applicant's training and experience and will also give you ideas for areas of questioning in the interview.

The applicant must provide a record of CPD from the previous 12 months that meets the requirements set by RICS Regulation. This must amount to at least 20 hours of learning activities. Visit the CPD compliance guide web page for more details.

Case studies

Applicants will submit three case studies (1,000–1,500 words each) based on projects they have worked on. They are recommended to select projects in which they have played a leading role in terms of strategy, management, decision making, problem-solving and client relationship management.

The project could be related to a technical or professional service for a client or an internal or external activity/initiative for the applicant's employer/business.

If applicants have worked in more than one country, they must submit at least one case study on a project in the country in which they are being assessed. The applicant's involvement in each project must be within three years of their application for final assessment.

Case study on senior professional competence

1000–1500 words covering a project that demonstrates experience against the leadership, managing people and managing resources competencies.

Case study on technical competence 1

1000–1500 words covering a project that demonstrates experience against a minimum of two core technical competencies selected for the pathway.

One competency must be required to Level 3.

Case study on technical competence 2

1000–1500 words covering a project that demonstrates experience against a minimum of two technical competencies (different from other case study) selected for the pathway.

Applicants are asked to include the following in each case study:

- A brief overview of the key issues
- An account of their role/personal involvement
- An outline of any problems and the experience used to resolve these problems
- A note of the outcome and successful delivery with emphasis on the role they played.

All case studies should provide evidence of the applicant's senior profile, and relevance of their experience to the pathway and the mandatory competencies, especially conduct rules, ethics and professional practice. For each case study applicants will state the technical and mandatory competencies they have demonstrated.

3 Conflict 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 applicants 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 an applicant.

'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 which could give rise to conflict.

- friend
- acquaintance
- any family relationship (even remote)
- neighbour
- friends in common
- colleague past or present
- client
- 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 applicant or their firm?
- Has there been any conflict between our firms or the applicant 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 applicant, but this may not present an issue to the applicant 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.

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 applicant'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 an applicant 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.

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

4 Final assessment interview

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 applicant has similar time allocated to the individual elements of the interview. Any deviation may give rise to an appeal if the applicant is referred.

As a guide, the interview follows the structure in the table below. When the applicant 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.

Applicant’s personal introduction	10 minutes
Discussion of the three case studies and career, addressing the technical, mandatory and senior professional competencies Discussion of CPD (if necessary) Discussion of professional ethics Close of interview (Note: Look for opportunities to discuss ethical issues throughout).	50 minutes
Total	**60 minutes**

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

There may be very rare occasions where an applicant 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 applicant and may, at their discretion, end the interview at any time on the grounds of health concerns even if the applicant feels well enough to proceed.

When everything is ready the chairperson will ask the applicant 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 applicant’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.

Assessment approach

Please take account of the applicant’s experience and seniority. Your task is to determine whether the applicant is competent to practise as an RICS chartered professional. You should approach the interview as a professional structured discussion.

The most important thing to bear in mind is that an applicant may not currently be doing technical work, but will often be managing others who do. Your emphasis is on the management skills.

Your questions should focus on the applicant’s career experience, concentrating mostly on recent experience. The application details and case studies will be a good source of evidence for this.

Be aware that applicants are likely to have had little previous exposure to RICS terminology, so may express the concepts behind the RICS competencies in different ways: you should be prepared to adapt the way you express these concepts so that the applicant understands clearly.

Applicants may have gained experience in some technical competencies earlier in their career, and progressed to a management role. It is acceptable to judge an applicant as competent if you are satisfied that the required levels of a competency were achieved at some point in the applicant’s experience.

Applicants may also have gained experience from other geographical locations. As an assessor, you will be expected to take a holistic approach and take into consideration and ask questions on also the broader experience gained that has been submitted. However the applicant must demonstrate they have a working knowledge of the legislation and are competent to practise in the country they are being assessed in.

Use your judgement. If you feel a level 3 question more appropriate you may start your questioning there; if the applicant answers it competently you may decide that it is unnecessary to go into detail about levels 1 and 2 and may move on to another competency.

You should be able to identify the mandatory competencies when applicants discuss their career history.

Sole practitioners

Some applicants may be in a consultancy role. An individual working as a consultant may not currently practise the same people management skills as they did in the former role. These applicants will normally follow the specialist assessment. However, if they choose to be assessed as senior professionals, you are entitled to take into account their management experience as long as it is in the reasonably recent past. As in all assessments, you should use your discretion in this.

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 an applicant, 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.

You will be informed if an adjustment has been agreed and given appropriate guidance.

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**.

For further information, refer to: Access Arrangements.

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 applicant 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 applicant 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 applicant 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 applicant; 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 applicant 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 candidate or any of the assessment panel.

Panel decision

The applicant should demonstrate technical competence (achieved at some point in their career).

You should apply the most weight to the senior professional competencies and the level of advanced responsibility the applicant performs. As a manager and leader, a senior professional applicant is in a position to set an example and dictate the tone of an organisation or other colleagues. Ethics are therefore of vital importance and you must ensure you cover this in your decision.

Your decision should be based broadly on the following priorities.

Senior professional competencies and senior profile	**50%**
Technical pathway competencies and mandatory competencies	**25%**
Ethics and professionalism	**25%**

Result

The result will be pass or refer. If you refer an applicant the chairperson is required to produce a referral report.

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 applicant.

The report should focus on the applicant's competency deficiency. You need to provide constructive comments that clearly state the deficiencies and how to rectify them. The comments should encourage applicants to apply for final assessment again.

When referring applicants, you are not refusing access to the RICS qualification but are advising applicants 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 applicant's development.

Focus only on the applicant'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 applicant'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 applicant should be able to identify and achieve.

If the applicant has been referred, the chairperson should cover the following:

- Explain why the referral decision was reached
- Provide guidance and advice to enable the applicant to be successful in the near future.

Any major concerns about the applicant's suitability should be discussed with RICS. Advice and guidance should be provided and, in particular, any specific advice about presentation or interview skills. RICS will contact the applicant to discuss the next steps and send a referral pack.

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
candidatesupport@rics.org

rics.org