



# Candidate guide

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# Associate candidate guide

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# Introduction

The RICS Associate qualification is about demonstrating competence for a specific role. To achieve the qualification you need to provide a written submission as described in this guide, which we will assess. You will also complete the RICS professionalism module.

You must use the relevant **pathway guide** with this document. Pathway guides describe in detail the required competencies for your chosen pathway and give examples to help you prepare your assessment.

## Commitment is key

When you enrol as a candidate, you are making a commitment to become an RICS Associate (AssocRICS). You have six years from your date of enrolment to achieve the AssocRICS qualification.

This guide will help you prepare for the associate assessment. Although there will be people to support you through your assessment, it is your responsibility to make sure you start and remain committed to achieving the qualification.

## Four stages of your application

### 1. Enrolment

This is the stage where you register as a candidate. You will need to provide your personal details, evidence of any relevant qualifications and employment details.

Follow the enrolment link on the [Associate member](#) web page.

### 2. Submission

You prepare your submission using the materials provided by RICS.

Submission consists of a summary of experience, case study and your continuing professional development (CPD).

### 3. Ethics

Anyone joining RICS must show commitment to professional ethics.

You will take the RICS professionalism module.

### 4. Assessment

Our assessors review your submission and decide whether you have met all the requirements to become an RICS Associate (AssocRICS).

## The people

### Counsellor/proposer

**Your counsellor:** Your counsellor must be a chartered surveyor or AssocRICS.

They should support you through your training and must be satisfied that you have achieved the required levels in all the competencies needed for your chosen pathway.

They may not have personal knowledge of your experience in all the chosen competencies as you may have achieved some of them years ago or in a different job. They will still be able to support you and verify your experience by having discussions with you about your experience.

It is your responsibility as applicant to find a suitable counsellor.

### Proposer:

The requirement for a proposer is part of the fit and proper person test for electing or re-admitting an individual to RICS.

If elected through the Associate assessment, you must choose one proposer, which can be your counsellor.

### Assessors

Two assessors review your submissions.

- **Assessor #1** – an RICS member trained to assess your submission and decide whether you have met the competency requirements, and responsible for writing the referral report if your submission is unsuccessful.
- **Assessor #2** – an RICS member trained to assess your submission and decide whether you have met the competency requirements.

## RICS assessment team

Your main contact with us. The team is responsible for helping with any queries and administering your assessment. For local contact details please see the [Contact us](#) web page.

## Pathway guides

Your pathway is your chosen area of specialism. Each pathway consists of:

- the technical competencies you need for your role
- the business skills that all practitioners need (known as mandatory competencies).

There is a guide for each pathway covered by the Associate qualification.

It is essential you download the pathway guide that relates to your chosen specialism. Your pathway guide explains the requirements of all competencies in your pathway. Referring to it will enable you to evaluate how your experience meets the competency requirements. Make sure you have it to hand when preparing your submission.

Pathway guides can be found on the [Sector pathways](#) web page.

# 1 Submission

Your submission consists of:

- a summary of experience
- case study
- CPD record.

These demonstrate your experience, competence and ability to perform in your role.

## Summary of experience

Your summary of experience should demonstrate how your experience meets the requirements of the technical and mandatory competencies of your chosen pathway. You may not include appendices or additional supporting materials for the summary of experience outside of the allowed word count.

## Technical competencies

You have to demonstrate **six** technical competencies. You will write an individual summary for each one. All six, together, must come to no more than 2000 words. Summaries must clearly show how your work experience is relevant to each competency. Examples are available at the [Associate member](#) web page.

## Mandatory competencies

Mandatory competencies are non-technical general business skills. There are **eight** mandatory competencies. You must write competency summaries for seven of these.

Write one brief example for each to demonstrate you have met the competency. There is a word limit of 1000 words in total – approximately 150 words per mandatory competency.

**You are not required to write about the mandatory competency 'Conduct rules, ethics and professional practice', because you will demonstrate this by completing the RICS professionalism module.**

## Case study

The case study is an account of a project or piece of work you have been involved in, described in terms of the competencies. Focus mainly on the two technical competencies most relevant to your day-to-day work, but try to refer to other technical and mandatory competencies as well.

You must select a project or projects that you have been personally involved in the two years prior to your assessment submission date. A project may have started over two years ago but your case study should reference your involvement in the past two years.

Your case study validity will be calculated on a rolling period from the date you submit for assessment. You should check that activities you discuss in your case study are within the required 24 months, working back from the date you submit.

Your case study must not exceed 2500 words. If at any time RICS staff discover your case study is over the word count they reserve the right to cancel your assessment.

You may attach illustrations, calculations or plans. They should be attached only if they are directly relevant to the two main competencies you are demonstrating in your case study.

The case study template provides a text box for you to describe briefly the context. Use it to set the scene with some details of the project. Include the date and location, the name of the employer and details of your job at the time.

Your case study should show the following:

- the objective of the project
- your knowledge, skills and experience
- the role you played and the contribution you made
- technical skills you employed
- the overall outcome of the project.

Ensure your case study:

- demonstrates understanding of the competencies
- focuses on two technical competencies
- displays some of the general business skills (mandatory competencies).

While writing the case study you should be aware of what you have already said in your summary of experience. Make sure the level and scope of activities you are describing is consistent.

The assessors will expect you to present a sensible and realistic topic for your case study that reflects the skills needed to fulfil the role of a professional in your area of practice and geographical location. You should expect to be assessed in the country where you work. This is because you are required to have a working knowledge of the legislation and be competent to practice in the country where you are working.

## Continuing professional development (CPD)

CPD is the systematic updating and enhancement of skills, knowledge and competence that takes place throughout your working life. It should be closely linked to your current work.

CPD can be taken from various sources including attending conferences, meetings or seminars, completing an academic course or informal reading. It is for you, as a professional, to decide what is appropriate and this should complement both your mandatory and technical competencies.

Special attention must be given to the principles underpinning CPD:

- gained in a structured manner
- based on an explicit process of selecting, planning and evaluating the activities
- reflect learning from informal training sources e.g. structured reading, secondments

All candidates are required to complete 48 hours of CPD, this must have taken place in the 12 months prior to your associate assessment.

Your 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 your CPD must be dedicated to formal development. For more information on the types of formal and informal CPD, please go to the [CPD compliance guide](#) web page.

Your CPD will be calculated on a rolling period from the date you submit for assessment. You should check that your CPD activities are within the required 12 months, working back from the date you submit.

Once you have become an RICS Associate (AssocRICS) you must continue to undertake and record online a minimum of 20 hours of CPD activity each calendar year as part of your commitment to your professional development.

### Important notes on your submission

**Confidentiality:** you must ensure you have your employer's and client's consent to disclose any sensitive details in your submission. If you cannot get this consent you should disguise facts that might otherwise make the project identifiable.

Similarly, commissions undertaken by you may have been litigious and confidential; you should explain this at the outset and change the name, location and function of the building/asset so that it would be unrecognisable.

The information contained in your submission will be treated as confidential by your panel of assessors and RICS.

**References:** extracts from Acts of Parliament, case law and other sources should not be quoted at length but essential references must be given.

**Total word count:** you must include a word count at the end of your case study. You can include notes on what you have included in the count. The assessors will be looking to see that you have kept within the prescribed word count for both your summary of experience and your case study.

**Appendices:** remember you need to use your appendices to support your case study and enhance the information you have given to the assessment panel. If it isn't relevant, don't use it.

**Overview:** while writing the case study you should be aware of what evidence you have already provided in your summary of experience and ensure that the level and scope of activities you are describing is consistent with what has been detailed in the summary.

The assessors will look at the summary of experience and case study individually, but will also take a holistic view. Review all your written evidence together before you submit it, and make sure there are no omissions or contradictions.

Finally, your submission must reflect your abilities in the following areas:

- written and graphic communication
- professional standards of organisation and presentation
- analysis, reflective thought and problem solving
- learning from experience gained.

## 2 Rules of Conduct

The five Rules of Conduct support positive change in the built and natural environments, through promoting and enforcing the highest ethical standards in valuation, the development and management of land, real estate, construction and infrastructure.

- 1. Members and firms must be honest, act with integrity and comply with their professional obligations, including obligations to RICS**
- 2. Members and firms must maintain their professional competence and ensure that services are provided by competent individuals who have the necessary expertise**
- 3. Members and firms must provide good-quality and diligent service**
- 4. Members and firms must treat others with respect and encourage diversity and inclusion**
- 5. Members and firms must act in the public interest, take responsibility for their actions and act to prevent harm and maintain public confidence in the profession**

The Rules are based on ethical principles of honesty, integrity, competence, service, respect and responsibility. Professional ethical practice by RICS members and firms provides a foundation for effective markets, pioneers better places to live and work, and is a force for positive social impact.

The Rules apply to all members (as defined in Bye-Law 5.1) and firms regulated by RICS. RICS members and firms operate around the world, and the Rules of Conduct apply to members and firms wherever they work or practise. Members and firms (in particular, their responsible principal) should be prepared to explain their actions and how they have complied with the Rules.

### Professionalism module

You are required to successfully complete the RICS professionalism module prior to the final assessment. The module includes four e-learning modules and a test.

Please note once successfully completed this is valid for 12 months.

There will be a significant emphasis on the Rules of Conduct, professional practice and ethics in the interview, so you must familiarise yourself with the Rules. Please remember, you can be referred on this area alone.

### Plagiarism

RICS uses Turnitin, a system to help check candidates' submissions are their own work and stand up to independent scrutiny. The system will compare a candidate's submission against submissions from other candidates and other existing works. RICS reserve the right at any time either to submit or require you to submit your documentation into Turnitin. If the system flags concerns with the level of similarities between work you have submitted and existing works then we may refer the matter for further investigation which could result in disciplinary action being taken against you. In addition, the progress of your application may be impacted including potential removal from the assessment process pending the outcome of the investigation.

# 3 Assessment

Two assessors will carry out your assessment. They will evaluate your submission and decide whether you have met the requirements for your chosen pathway.

## Result

Within one month of the submission deadline you will receive your result.

## Pass

If you receive a pass result you will be awarded the RICS Associate qualification (AssocRICS).

## Refer

If the outcome is a refer you will be sent a referral report explaining why the assessors reached this decision.

To be eligible for reassessment you must normally:

- agree with your counsellor how you will address the deficiencies identified in the referral report
- complete some further relevant professional experience
- update your summary of experience to reflect your new experience
- continue to complete your CPD and update your record to ensure it continues to meet the CPD requirements
- write a new case study or resubmit the same case study, updated to reflect referral report feedback. If the work you refer to in your case study is now over two years old you will need to write a new case study on a different project.

- update all elements of your submission accordingly to ensure the submission requirements are met when you resubmit.

Your submission must also include your referral report. This allows the next assessment panel to identify how you have addressed the deficiencies in the report.

Once you have completed the above, you will be ready for reassessment at the next available assessment session. Please note you will be reassessed on all the requirements of the associate assessment including all competencies for your chosen pathway.

The assessment takes a holistic approach: You can be referred on a competency that a previous panel did not comment on or where you have not changed the competency statement because your entire submission is used to assess each competency.

## Appeal

The appeal panel does not question the merits of the assessors' decision. It looks at the way the assessment was conducted, and will allow the appeal only if, on the balance of probabilities, there was fault in the process. It does not reach any conclusion about your competence to practise: it considers only administrative or procedural matters.

When an appeal is made, it must:

- be in writing, accompanied by the appropriate fee
- be made by you and not a third party

- clearly state the grounds on which the appeal is being made.

You will have 21 days from the date of your referral report being issued by RICS to appeal. Details of how to appeal are available at the [Assessment applications](#) web page.

The appeal panel has no powers to award the RICS Associate qualification. If an appeal is approved, the original assessment is disregarded and your submission will be sent for assessment by a new panel. If the appeal is dismissed the original assessment result will stand.

Please note the appeal panel's decision is final and there is no right to appeal this decision.



## Audit and quality assurance

We are committed to ensuring rigorous processes for the Associate qualification so that employers, clients and the public can have confidence that anyone achieving it, is competent to practise as an RICS Associate.

### Desktop audit

We will select a number of submissions for audit as part of the quality assurance process. If your submission is audited, you and your counsellor may be asked for further confirmatory evidence of your role, responsibilities and work history.

### Verification interview

As part of the audit process we may require you to participate in a verification interview after your assessment.

The purpose of the interview is not to reassess your competence, but to verify the extent of your involvement in the work described in your submission, and the validity of the assessment. Any element of the assessment may be subject to audit.

Assessors will nominate a candidate for a verification interview if they have doubts about whether the written work is genuinely original – for example, if they suspect plagiarism.

If the auditor is not satisfied, we may refer the matter for further investigation.

## 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](#).

For further information, see: [Access Arrangements](#).

## 4 Candidate support

Contact the Candidate support team at:

[candidatesupport@rics.org](mailto:candidatesupport@rics.org)

Your RICS Candidate Support team is here to guide you from your enrolment as a candidate to qualifying as an RICS professional.

Visit the [Candidate Support](#) web page for:

**Introductory webinars** – to support candidates, available on demand.

**Interactive webinars** – designed to offer process support and best practice tips throughout the various stages of your assessment journey.

**Real-time support** – regular informal candidate drop-ins are a great way to speak to a member of the team about any assessment-related questions you may have.

**RICS Qualification Package** – all the resources you need to navigate your candidate journey. Through a combination of live and recorded sessions, gain access to interactive and technical eLearning modules, case studies, mock interviews and final assessment training support.

**RICS CPD Support Package** – access all the content you need and more all in one place. Included as part of your annual subscription renewal, this pack is a benefit available to members and candidates only.

**RICS podcast network** – an exclusive podcast series bringing together expert guests to discuss the most pertinent, industry-shaping topics from the world of chartered surveying.

**LionHeart** – is the independent charity for RICS candidates and professionals, past and present, and their families. From the moment you embark on your candidate journey, LionHeart is there to support you throughout the rest of your career.



## 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.

**rics.org**

General enquiries  
**[contactrics@rics.org](mailto:contactrics@rics.org)**

Candidate support  
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